

bite marks and bruises

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bite marks and bruises

by [miamango](#)

Summary

The alpha standing in front of him certainly isn't Sapnap.

He smells like smoke and crackling embers and pitch. It's stupidly attractive.
George dislikes him immediately.

Despite being an alpha, George hasn't gone on a date in *years*. His life becomes a disaster from the very moment he antagonizes his date's infuriating roommate.

Notes

hi everyone!!

I wrote this fic in between bits of my vacation, and it was such a fun topic to explore

hope you enjoy ! <3

George honestly doesn't know why he's here, shirt collar strangling his throat and hands stuffed uncomfortably into the pockets of his jeans.

He supposes that he *could* cancel on his date—for god's sake, he scheduled it through *Grindr*, it's not like a permanent betrothal contract. It's not like he *wanted* to stand outside a dingy flat on a Friday afternoon, summer sun already toasting the back of his neck to a fine crisp.

George supposes the thin fabric of his shirt and the sunblock that he'd applied liberally that morning wouldn't stand a chance against the heat. It makes him more miserable than he already is—fake smile plastered on his lips as he works up the nerve to actually ring the fucking doorbell to the house he's currently standing in front of.

God, George sometimes wishes that he wasn't such a pushover. He's an alpha, goddamnit—he's supposed to resist Quackity's ill-timed taunting. The beta was supremely obnoxious earlier this week, hogging all the space on George's couch during one of habitual their movie nights.

Hours spent binge watching *The Clone Wars* (Quackity is a hopeless fanatic) had devolved into casual bickering. Hand buried in a bowl of popcorn, Quackity wasted no time in getting into one of George's biggest problems: his arid, dry-as-a-desert love life.

It's a familiar topic to George—especially since he's been forced to sit through similar interrogations during the long, unfortunate years he's known Quackity. His best friend can be relentless, especially when he's high off excess butter and *Star Wars*.

"You're not getting any younger, George," he cajoled. His natural scent of late-night drives and sour cherry rose above the smell of burnt popcorn kernels. "Might as well find someone to tie you down before you become completely decrepit."

At George's incredulous look, he rolled his eyes and buried buttery fingertips inside a ceramic bowl once more. "C'mon, even finding someone to blow off some steam with would do you good. God knows I want you off my back."

George sneered at the thought of engaging in anything intimate with *Quackity*. A hard kick to the beta's stomach certainly reaffirmed that point.

"I hardly think that finding some random person to fuck into my mattress will solve any problems, Quackity."

Indeed, George curled his lip at the thought of some needy, whimpering omega spreading their sickly-sweet pheromones throughout his apartment. The mere thought of cloying vanilla or saccharine strawberry almost had him retching into the near-empty popcorn bowl.

But "defeat" isn't a word in Quackity's vocabulary. The beta jammed his heel into George's ribs in retaliation (it hurt like a *motherfucker*—those bony feet should be categorized as a lethal weapon).

"You absolute imbecile," he snorted, the scent of sour cherry taking on a distinctly unimpressed undertone. George wrinkled his nose, but Quackity's tirade was still forthcoming. "There is a stick shoved up your ass so far that I don't think it'll ever see the light of day. Maybe *you* need to be fucked into the mattress—that would jostle some brain cells loose, at least."

George grumbled at that, no immediate response coming to his lips.

But when Quackity sprang to his knees on the couch, ratty sweatpants swallowing his legs, George should've known that he was doomed. Bright smile adorning his face and one finger raised in the air, Quackity looked like a man with an incorrigible, damning idea.

George's fate was sealed with four seemingly insignificant words: "You should download *Grindr!*"

And now he's standing here. Irritable, sunburned, and quite frankly done.

The beta that George is supposed to meet for their coffee date seemed nice enough through the dating app, at least. Sapnap has brown hair and brown eyes and apparently spends his free time playing *Valorant*. Which isn't really an issue to George, because god knows what *he's* doing with his free time. Not fucking people into mattresses, according to Quackity.

It's not like he has high hopes for tonight anyways, George thinks. His flat is messy, dirty bowls and clothes strewn absolutely everywhere. The container of lube that he keeps on his bedside table is running on its last dregs, which is absolutely horrid to think about when George's left hand has seen the majority of the action. Alright, all of the action.

But there's no time like the present, as Quackity says. Might as well get this shitshow over with. After straightening his collar and fixing the loose strands of hair that fall into his eyes, George reaches over to ring the doorbell.

It emits a shrill, piercing noise that George can hear even when standing outside. He fights the urge to wince, instead tracing his gaze over the white paneling and chipped oak of the front door.

Shifting on his feet, George takes a small step forwards and pastes a smile on his face. Might as well make a good impression for the first date that he's been on in months.

Thankfully, George isn't forced to wait long.

The door swings open abruptly, leaving him blinking away the strands of hair that fall into his eyes from the gust. He's uncomfortably aware of the sweat that dots his hairline, the sunshine flush that coats his cheeks. George looks up and up and *up*.

The alpha standing in front of him certainly isn't Sapnap.

He smells like smoke and crackling embers and pitch. It's stupidly attractive. George dislikes him immediately.

"Whatever you're selling, we don't want it."

The stranger leans against the doorway, all golden skin and messy hair and shuttered green eyes. His mouth is twisted with boredom, the metal piercing adorning his bottom lip gleaming in the sun. And the way that his white tee plasters itself over his collarbones should be illegal.

"Who the fuck are you?" George sneers, knuckles whitening at his sides.

When the alpha offers a lazy grin, he's tempted to drive those knuckles through his teeth. The stranger takes his time before responding, lowered brows and narrowed eyes trailing over George's body in a languid sweep.

George really isn't the confrontational type, even though he's an alpha and his biological

imperative basically is to fight and fuck. He's never let the swirling cloud of pheromones smog his brain, pent-up aggression heightening at a potential rival.

But there's no explanation for why his shoulders raise, the tension that results in a clenched jaw and narrowed eyes. The way that he wants to rip the other alpha into shreds, especially at the challenging look that's being tossed his way.

"I'm Dream," the asshole in front of him begins. "Now, can you explain why you're spreading your filth all over my doorstep?"

As if to punctuate the words, Dream's nostrils flare deliberately, undoubtedly taking in George's scent with an expression of distaste. It's been *months* since someone's been this rude—to his face at least—and George momentarily sees red.

"I don't see why it's any of your business, but I'm looking for Sapnap," he manages through gritted teeth.

Dream just offers a noncommittal hum, playing with the metal piercing on his bottom lip with his tongue. He relaxes further against the doorframe, a lazy, languid movement that has George snarling without realizing it.

He's only met Dream for a grand total of two minutes, and he already wants to throttle the other alpha or rip out his throat or push him to his knees—which should be *vaguely* worrying since George has never had such a strong reaction to *anyone* before, alpha or not.

"Are you going to answer my question?" George says, lip pulled back from his teeth and head tilted to glare at those startling green eyes. "Or are you just going to lounge there like a stupid mutt?"

Now *that* darkens Dream's expression.

His scent deepens, spilling past the doorway in heavy waves of crackling flame and fluttering ash. George fights the urge to inhale.

"It takes one to know one," Dream growls out through gritted teeth. He shifts, no longer leaning against the doorframe and instead stepping forward to crowd George at the front step. Tawny hair falls over his forehead, and when he shifts his head, a slender curl of ink peeks from his collarbone.

George wants to sink his teeth into Dream's throat.

He knows that he's not the most intimidating—nearly half a foot shorter than the other alpha, but George doesn't yield an inch. His own scent roiling around him, George takes a step closer. Dream is forced to look down, ink spilling across his irises and bloodlust rising to the surface of his skin.

George can smell it, the deep char of pine and smoke and copper that wreaths Dream's skin like cologne. It makes his blood thrum faster, pulse leaping at his neck and scent glands aching in response to the unspoken challenge.

Just when George thinks that Dream is finally going to give in and wrap his hands around George's throat, a muffled sound draws their attention.

The speed at which Dream steps away from him is actually hilarious. Dark curls pop into the doorframe, accompanied by the neutral scent of a beta—in Sapnap's case, ocean tides and faint sunscreen.

"What's going on here?" he asks curiously, looking from George to Dream with raised brows.

His scent wafts on the breeze, but the curling smell of smoke is still embedded in George's sinuses. "Just making a new acquaintance," George offers with a bright smile.

He can see Dream scowling in his periphery, but George doesn't give a flying shit. Although he didn't want to go on this date in the first place, he's not going to let someone like *Dream* ruin it for him.

Thankfully, Sapnap doesn't seem to sense the animosity still brewing in the air. He ignores the stubborn way that Dream chews at his lip piercing, the alpha leaning against the doorframe once more.

"It's good to see you, George! So you've met my roommate, Dream," Sapnap says with a smile curling across his lips. It's a sweet grin, matching the rumpled band tee that clings to his collarbone and the mess of curls at his temples.

George would be more engrossed in his date if he weren't currently glaring at spit-swollen lips and golden skin and dark ink.

"Yeah, it's been a pleasure," George mutters dryly. He slowly shifts his gaze back to Sapnap, letting a genuine smile creep across his lips. He can feel, rather than see, Dream tense. "Are you ready to go, Sap?"

"Give me a second to grab my keys," he calls back, vanishing further into the house.

George tries to peer into the opening until Dream blocks the doorway once more. The alpha's arms are crossed over his chest, highlighting the flicker of muscle that disappears past his shirtsleeve.

With his legs spread apart and back ramrod straight, the pose is annoying as hell. Especially when George has to crane his neck to look into those narrowed eyes.

"What? Gonna give me the talk—*don't do anything stupid or I'll rip your eyes out*—right?"

"No," Dream says, lips pressed in an inscrutable line.

He leaves it at that, staring at George's face while the smell of fire mellows into something slower, richer. It makes George's fingers curl into the hem of his shirt.

Dream is a study of contrasts, he thinks, surveying tan features with a dispassionate gaze in turn. Afternoon light casts harsh shadow onto the planes of his face, splitting golden skin into a myriad of telescoping ribbons. Metal glints on his lip, and for a split second, George wonders about the potential of other piercings beneath the soft clothing.

Despite the harsh ink curling over his collarbone, the curve of Dream's mouth is soft. His bottom lip is slightly more full than the top, and it's flushed an attractive pink from being pulled between white teeth. With rumpled hair and white cotton stretched over his chest, Dream looks like an model straight off *Vogue*.

George thinks that he might be able to tolerate Dream when his mouth is shut. But then again, the alpha is trailing his gaze over George's form, like he wants to fight him or bite him or both.

A flare of irritation wells up. "What are you looking at?" George sneers, venom dripping past his lips to spatter arsenic against wooden flooring. He hopes it sizzles.

Although Dream's scent spikes, he doesn't make any discernible movement. The other alpha just shifts, arms still crossed tightly over his chest and highlighting the scoop of his neckline. George

wants to murder himself for noticing.

But then Dream deliberately meets George's gaze, pink lips curling back in a sneer that could curdle milk.

"Nothing," he replies with a slow, pointed glance at George—battered converse, untucked shirt and all.

And this time, George actually has to clamp down on his scent before he rips Dream's throat out.

He's still fuming by the time Sapnap comes out, key jangling merrily on his finger. What's worse is that George can smell amusement on Dream, like the crisp tang when he first opens a blood orange. He decides that he hates it even more than Dream's natural scent.

"Be careful, Sap," the other alpha says, turning to his roommate. His gaze is gentler, though still threaded with caution at George's presence.

"Oh, come on Dream," Sapnap groans, jostling past the doorway to stand at George's side. George tries to stifle a flare of satisfaction at that but fails—if the flash of Dream's eyes is anything to go by. "It's not like George is going to murder me and dump my body in a random trash can. He can't even drive, for god's sake."

George stifles a wince at that, especially as Dream turns to flash him a slow, incredibly pleased smirk. Driving isn't necessary, George has to fight the urge to say. He can always walk. Or take the bus. Besides, gas prices are expensive and he'd rather spend twenty bucks on a pint of orange blossom ice cream instead of the alternative.

Dream's eyes glitter as if he can imagine the complaints cycling through George's head, and George has to look away as he tugs his bottom lip in between his teeth.

"Fine," Dream concedes. He's still smiling, and this time George actually takes a half step forward, tempted to put his fist through those pretty teeth. "Go on, Sap. Have some fun." His eyes are on George when he says the damning words.

George isn't sure if they're a warning, but heat rises to his cheeks regardless. "We will," he grits out, thunderclouds roiling underneath his tongue.

Dream merely raises a brow before stepping inside and closing the door. George swears he can taste embers and a dying sunset when the alpha disappears from view.

It's soon replaced by salt and seafoam when Sapnap moves past him. "God, I'm sorry about all that." When George falls into step beside him and looks at the beta questioningly, he clarifies. "Dream, I mean. My roommate can be an utter asshole when he wants to be."

The sun sears onto George's shoulders through his shirt, and he raises a brow. "There are times when he doesn't want to be an asshole? Shocking."

He's quite aware that insulting his date's roommate isn't the best way to kickstart an afternoon spent together, but George didn't exactly have high hopes to start with. When Sapnap laughs, like a boisterous chime of soft bells, George glances over.

The beta's good looking, he can admit. He's a bit shorter than George, dark eyebrows and a wide smile brightening his features. Mocha-tinted strands curl at his temples, and hazel eyes are warm when he meets George's gaze—unlike a flinty-edged jade that crackled with heatwaves and firestorms.

“Dream can be a lot to handle,” Sapnap admits, kicking loose bits of gravel with the tip of a beaten-up sneaker. “But I’ve put up with him for ten years; I think I can get through several more without throttling him. I think.”

George laughs at that, letting a genuine smile creep past his lips. Sapnap is funny and sweet and charming—everything that George should want. Their brief conversations, first on *Grindr* and then through *iMessage*, were engaging. And yet...

To distract himself from wearisome thoughts, George parts his lips. “Have you been to *Le Moment* often?”

The cafe that Sapnap suggested for their first date seemed quaint enough online, but George has serious doubts about the authenticity of the French-branded eatery. At least he has the cinnamon-dusted chocolate croissants to look forward to. Although he may not be fond of the same flavor on omegas, he’d certainly welcome it in his stomach.

“Often enough,” Sapnap shrugs, the fabric of his navy blue shirt sliding over his collarbones. He’s unfazed by the change in conversation. “It’s a couple blocks away, which is hardly a long walk, but Dream still begs me to bring his favorite donuts home. Lazy ass.”

George takes a second to ponder that piece of information. Little weeds spring up from in between the pavement cracks, and he absentmindedly steps over a discarded bottle cap.

“I didn’t really take Dream to be a sugar enthusiast.”

Sapnap leads them past a fluorescent stop sign, ignoring a speeding car that rattles against the heated asphalt. George knows that they’re almost to the cafe—according to his Google Maps surveying last night—and wrinkles his nose at a toppled trash can on the same block.

“He’s not really,” Sapnap admits while turning to George with a sheepish smile. “But he has a weak spot for brown-sugar pastries, and I’m happy to say that I’ve exploited it many a time.”

George’s laugh bubbles past his lips. It’s hard to imagine *Dream*—with his insolent sneer and dark tattoos—eagerly sinking his teeth into a donut. But Sapnap’s grin is too bright to be fake, and he indulges the taunt with a returning smile.

“I might just have to try those brown sugar donuts, then,” George laughs. “Purely for scientific purposes, of course.”

“Of course,” Sapnap agrees, a conciliatory smirk washing over his features like a noonday tide. “We’re here anyways, so you can get right onto ordering a truckload of sugar.”

“I’ll die happy,” George murmurs as he glances at the cafe’s exterior.

Sandwiched between a bookstore and a grocer’s, the bleached wooden paneling and clear glass windows lend the building an air of comfort. There are little tables outside, small chairs and twisting lines of metal that draw his eye. Little springs of daisy in delicate vases adorn each square of wood, and even George can admit that the overall effect is stunning.

While he stands gaping at the cafe and relishing the faint smell of bitter coffee, Sapnap opens the door. A gentle chime of welcoming bells overlays his words.

“We’re not even inside yet and you’re salivating,” Sapnap cajoles with a shit-eating grin. George rolls his eyes and steps next to the beta. “After you,” Sapnap gestures with a hand still braced against the door.

When George steps inside, the smell of sugar hits him like a truck. Senses more attuned than Sapnap's, he chokes back a cough while the beta glances at the counter in bliss. Raspberry-peach tartlets glisten with honey behind carefully-cleaned glass, and mini truffles drip chocolate onto their paper wrappings.

"Do you have anything in particular in mind?" Sapnap asks, gaze still fixated on the cavity-inducing assortment of pastries.

George frowns, warm light filtering through his lashes as he glances at the beta. "Do *you* have anything in particular in mind? I can order for the both of us, if you'd like." George still doesn't see an outcome for this date, but that doesn't mean he has to be an asshole. Besides, Sapnap seems nice enough—from the fifteen minutes that they've been in each other's presence, at least.

Somehow, the beta finds the strength to raise a brow and tear his eyes away from the assortment of chocolate. "Because you're an alpha?"

"Because I asked you on the date?" George says, brows furrowed a little in confusion. He didn't offer to pay because of some biological imperative, merely because he wanted to.

But it seems that Sapnap has a backbone of iron, because mirth shines in his hazel eyes. "I suggested the cafe, so I got you. Go crazy, anything here should be pretty good."

"Alright," George concedes, scanning over the glass pastry case with teeth nibbling at his lower lip. He's not overly fond of saccharine sugar, but figures that he can let loose once in a while. "I think I'll go for a small hot coffee and one of those brown sugar donuts? I can grab us a table in the meantime."

"Good choice," Sapnap says with a knowing grin. He turns to the barista, a sandy-haired omega with sleepy eyes and a sweet scent of saltwater taffy. An oversized sweater hangs from a petite frame, and George raises an amused brow as Sapnap's scent flares slightly.

Leaving Sapnap to his machinations, George turns to the back of the cafe. It's not crowded, and George veers past two omegas to claim a table by the window. Warm light casts rivulets of butter onto the rough grain, and he traces the swirling pattern of the wood with his thumb while waiting for Sapnap to return.

The beta doesn't take long, placing a steaming cup of coffee onto the table. It's rich and dark, and the concentrated scent of caffeine is almost overwhelming when George lifts it to his lips. He murmurs out a thank you as Sapnap hands him the donut. There's a rosy flush on the other boy's cheeks.

"Had fun ordering?" George teases while the beta prepares to bite into his own pastry—a salted, caramel-coated croissant.

The way Sapnap coughs and sputters around the bite of dough might have been the best thing George has seen all day.

"What do you mean?" he chokes out, completely invalidating his question a second later. Flush creeping up his cheeks, Sapnap makes pretty denials. "That—that was nothing."

George snorts as the scent of turbulent waves reaches his nose. "You're acting like that pretty omega isn't staring at us right now."

Sapnap whips his head around so fast that George can feel the gust of air from the abrupt movement. Seeing that the barista isn't in fact staring at them, the beta slumps his shoulders before

sheepishly turning back to George. The blush on his cheeks is colored a cranberry red, matching the crimson-embroidered tablecloth beneath their plates.

George allows Sapnap another bite of his pastry before interrupting.

“You should go for it.” When the beta looks at him incredulously, George shrugs his shoulders. “You’d be cute together.”

Indeed, the smile when Sapnap had spoken to the pretty barista had been radiant. Lip caught between his teeth and eyes glazed over with the remnants of an indolent daydream, Sapnap seems to agree.

He quickly snaps out of it when George lifts his coffee mug to his lips, warm porcelain yielding to the slightest tang of hazelnut.

“You must think that I’m an asshole.”

Honestly, George wants to thank him. He knows that Quackity might get on his ass about it, but George would much rather watch the blush on Sapnap’s cheeks than cause it himself. The beta is pleasant enough, with crinkled eyes when he laughs and a mischievous grin. George just isn’t attracted to him.

He doesn’t feel a tell-tale flare in his pulse, tendrils of arousal pooling in his stomach like hurricane winds and lightning storms. The desire to *touch* doesn’t rise to his fingertips, and all that George feels when he looks at Sapnap is an amused warmth.

“Nah, don’t worry about it,” he finally says, fingers splayed on the wooden table. “As long as we can play Valorant later, I don’t care.”

Sapnap laughs a little at that, sunlight curving over his smile. “God,” he mutters, pillowing his head on an upraised fist. “I can’t believe that you’re helping me to hit on someone else. Some kind of first date, huh?”

George rolls his eyes at the disparaging comment. Sure, today wasn’t exactly what he expected, but the course of the day wasn’t exactly unwelcomed. Lifting the cooling pastry to his mouth, he savors the gentle kick of cinnamon and sugar. A flake of dough clings to his lower lip, and George licks the sweetness off.

Delicate sucrose settles into his system, an exquisite rush of pleasure.

“Oh, shut up, Sapnap. I got a free donut out of it—this date is hardly the worst one that I’ve had.”

Dark strands of hair fall over the beta’s forehead as he props his chin on the heel of his palm.

“What was your worst date then?” Accompanied with a wry grin, he adds, “I need to feel better about myself.”

George winces at the memory, hiding the curl of his lips with another sip from the porcelain mug. When the bitter dregs of the coffee remain, a swirling overlay of ebon, he meets Sapnap’s gaze.

“I brought my date to a new restaurant near my place—I heard that the steaks there were good and I wanted a change from Quackity’s shitty cooking.”

Sapnap cocks his head at the unfamiliar name.

“My roommate,” George explains. “Anyways, the omega tried to maul me right in the middle of

the restaurant. Apparently ordering dessert was some kind of signal.”

“The fuck?” Sapnap’s teeth shine ivory from between parted lips, and George offers a solemn nod. “What was the dessert?”

Now it’s George’s turn to duck his head, tracing the rim of his mug with a warm fingertip. “Strawberries and whipped cream,” he mutters, mouth pulled into a self-deprecating wince.

Sapnap parts his lips in a boisterous laugh, and George sees a head of sandy curls whip in their direction. He fights a grin.

“I was craving fruit, alright? None of that chocolate lava cake bullshit,” he explains. “But she said that the strawberries were an obvious aphrodisiac and somehow the cause for jumping straight into my lap.”

“Jesus,” Sapnap shakes his head. “No wonder this is your first date in a while—I’d be permanently scarred.”

“Very traumatizing,” George agrees with a dry twitch of his lips. The meager remnants of his pastry succumbs to a graceful death on his plate, scattered crumbs and dustings of brown sugar decorating the white porcelain. “Doesn’t really matter, though. Being your wingman constitutes a perfect date in my book.”

Sapnap groans at the reminder, tipping his head back in exasperation. “Fuck off, I’m embarrassed enough as it is.” When George just sticks out his tongue, he tilts his head, question rising in the hazel depths of his eyes. “So, what about you?”

“What about me?”

“You know what I mean,” Sapnap frowns. George does not know what he means. It’s clarified soon enough when the beta taps his fingertips against the table, soft thuds echoing against the rough wood. “Any prospects? Anyone you’re slightly interested in?”

George squints his eyes, curling his fingers atop his lap. He’s not quite sure where Sapnap’s going with this, but the growing smile across the other’s face has him slightly worried.

Deflect, deflect, deflect.

“I mean, I did come on this date for a reason, right?”

Sapnap flushes at the reminder, rubbing the back of his neck sheepishly. A tang of salt meets George’s nose, and he grins at the beta’s embarrassment.

Deciding to spare Sapnap from further torture, George confesses, “It’s not like I’m saving myself for marriage, Sap. I’ll know if I see someone I’m attracted to.”

The beta is quiet for a second before tilting his head in a way that’s distinctively lupine. “What about Dream?”

For a second, George is struck speechless. Words twisting in his mouth, he can almost smell the phantom heat and char of the other alpha’s scent. It makes his upper lip curl back in contempt.

“I’m not into alphas like that,” he spits out, flashes of a cocky smirk and incorrigible attitude coming to his mind. It’s nothing against alphas in particular—George can tolerate dominating scents and tall frames. He’s an alpha too, after all.

But something about Dream gets under his skin in the worst way possible. Just thinking of the other alpha in the context that Sapnap is implying sends thunderclouds roiling underneath his fingertips. George knows that it's preemptive to judge someone based on a few minutes of interaction, but he can't help himself.

Dream, with his pointed smile and metal-sharp gleam of insouciance, couldn't be further from George's type.

Sapnap seems to sense his irritation, hiding a smile in his raised fist. "You're not into alphas?" His question is all too innocent, making George scowl.

"That's not what I said." George is aware that he's getting flustered, pink creeping up his cheeks and scent spilling into the air. "Besides, why did you think of him in the first place?"

"Dunno," Sapnap says. This time, George can see why Dream and the beta are perfect roommates; now, he wants to smack the shit-eating smile off Sapnap's face, too. "I thought you guys hit it off when you were waiting for me."

George remembers Dream's voice, low and pitched with the arrogance that being an alpha could only deliver. He remembers the deliberate smirk that parted pretty pink lips, a jarring juxtaposition to his rotten attitude. And he remembers Dream's scent, embers and ash trailing over pale skin like fine smog until George suffocated.

"I've met him once and he's already a pain in the ass," George mutters. He tries to clear his mind of metal piercings and dark ink and jade eyes, only succeeding somewhat when Sapnap's snort catches his attention.

"That's Dream for you." Although the beta surveys George's expression with a single-minded intensity, he apparently decides that the topic is worth abandoning. "Anyways, about being my wingman..."

George groans at Sapnap's words, hair falling into his eyes as he pitches his head forwards. Spending the next fifteen minutes convincing Sapnap to grow balls and talk to the pretty barista is a herculean feat. Despite the adoration in the beta's eyes whenever he glances towards the counter, George can practically smell his apprehension—a sharp salty tang that shoves up his sinuses.

"Alright, that's it," George sighs. When he stands, the chair emits a screeching wail that causes him to wince. "You better get your ass over there and make a move before we both die of old age. I'll wait for you outside."

George leaves Sapnap sputtering behind him, cheeks flushed and eyes wide. The scent of cinnamon and sugar dissipates as he steps outside, a crisp breeze ghosting over his arms. The sun still shines with the same vivacity as earlier, and George leans against warm brick while he waits.

Although his date didn't go exactly as expected, George enjoys Sapnap's company. He'll just have to make sure to never introduce the beta to Quackity—the thought of them colluding together gives him chills.

It makes him wonder, though.

He can almost imagine Sapnap elbowing Quackity's ribs during their biweekly movie nights, teasing him about the bag of burnt popcorn that suffocates the apartment. Quackity would retaliate with a swift pillow thrown at Sapnap's head, and George would inevitably be caught in the crossfire.

And Dream...

George isn't exactly sure where Dream fits into this scenario, but he knows that the alpha wouldn't appreciate his roommate being stolen away. The thought makes George grin, wicked anticipation curling up his spine.

When Sapnap emerges from the cafe with a bright smile, a new phone number safely tucked in his contacts, it's the thought of Dream's irritation that propels George to walk him home.

But Dream isn't at the doorway. There's no combative smirk for George to bristle at, no snide arch of a brow that makes him see red. The scent of candle wax and guttering flames is faint, as if Dream locked himself away amid cold walls and peeling plaster, choosing to ignore Sapnap's playful greeting.

George convinces himself that he doesn't care. It's not like he has any right to expect the other alpha's presence—especially when all George wants is to merely drive him up the wall.

His misplaced irritation is interrupted by Sapnap's laugh, tinged with the tiniest bit of smugness that makes George defensive.

"So, I'll see you back here on Sunday, right? C'mon, George, I know you're dying to get a better look around the place." He gestures into the apartment with a nonchalant thumb, but his shit-eating smirk causes George's scent to flare in warning. Sapnap rolls his eyes, but thankfully backs off, unspoken words drowning at the bottom of a sapphire-drenched ocean. "Fine, fine. Just be there, yeah? And bring popcorn. And potentially Quackity."

George groans at the words, apprehension sending crimson ribbons to wind around his neck. He thinks that he'd later regret introducing the two, but finds himself nodding anyways.

"Alright, but no tricks." He eyes Sapnap suspiciously, dark brows furrowed. "It's going to be just us and Quackity. And the extra-butter popcorn because there's no way in hell that I'd buy the organic, low-sodium shit that you're obsessed with."

Sapnap spreads his arms in a placating gesture but agrees. The scent of his satisfaction hits George's nose, like turquoise waters and shafts of sunlight.

"I'll see you Sunday!" the beta cheerfully reaffirms, ushering George out of the doorway and into the sun-drenched streets.

Left staring at chipped wood and flaking paint, George realizes that he doesn't quite know what he got himself into.

It turns out that bringing the popcorn was a bad idea. Half of it lies on Sapnap's carpet, spilled kernels that entwine with white shag. The other half sits in Quackity's stomach, the beta's lips still glossed with butter.

Sapnap doesn't seem to mind though, eyes riveted on the television while he and Quackity battle it out in Mario Kart. George tapped out a while ago, after Sapnap's underhanded schemes and a well-timed banana made him come dead last.

Despite Quackity claiming that George is a quitter, he doesn't mind sitting on the couch and watching them quarrel. His knees are pulled to his chest, and feather-stuffed pillows prop his back—despite the crumbs littering the couch, this is as comfortable as he's going to get.

“Take that, fucker,” Quackity hisses as Princess Peach attempts to bump Sapnap’s Toadette off a narrow bridge. “Payback’s a bitch.”

What Quackity’s paying Sapnap back for, George doesn’t know.

Glancing over to his left, George giggles. Sapnap’s brows are furrowed with concentration, dark hair brushed over his forehead to prevent the strands from falling into his eyes. His lip is tugged in between his teeth, and the beta’s knuckles are white over the controls. Sunlight filters through the living room, lightening mahogany tables into a bright honey, and George lets himself relax.

The tranquility doesn’t last long.

Quackity engages in another murder attempt, and his elbow inadvertently drives itself into George’s rib cage. Breaths escaping in a shallow wheeze that makes him practically see stars, George doubles over with his arms clutched protectively around his stomach.

“For fucks sake,” he groans. “I’d prefer to leave this house without any internal bleeding, thanks.”

George had positioned himself in between Quackity and Sapnap to prevent them from killing each other, but now sorely regrets the decision.

It’s Sapnap who retorts, lip curled into a concentrated snarl as he makes another treacherous circuit of the race track. “Oh, shut up, George. All’s fair in love and war.”

“Yeah,” Quackity jeers, carefully trying to aim a shell at Sapnap and groaning when the attempt fails.

“This is barely war, and I hardly think that all of us are in love,” George says wryly, his lips twisted into an amused smile nonetheless.

Despite Quackity’s continuous stream of curses, he finds the energy to taunt back. “And that mindset is why you’ll die an old spinster, Georgie.” His eyebrows waggle in George’s periphery and the beta makes sure to add with pointed emphasis, “With only your left hand for company.”

George is used to their teasing by now—he was right to think that Sapnap and Quackity would be a lethal combination. He sinks back into the cushions, sunshine streaming through the window and the scent of popcorn butter and indignation enveloping him.

“My left hand will still see more action than you ever will,” George retorts snidely, nose wrinkled and brows lowered in an attempt to hide his amusement.

“That’s not the insult that you think it is.” Sapnap shakes his head in mock disappointment.

“It really flopped,” Quackity chimes in with a widening grin.

The only course of action is to lean back on the couch with a beleaguered groan and hope not to be hit by any errant elbows. George resigns himself to watching the two play, creative insults and curses filling the air with multihued fire crackers.

He enjoys himself more than he thinks he would.

Sapnap and Quackity had shifted over to a bickering rematch when George hears the front door open. The living room is separated from the entrance by a long, whitewashed hallway, so he has a

second to brace himself before the scent of cherry-hued flames hits him.

With his back to the door, George makes it a point not to turn around. Rigid shoulders settling into a pillow, his gaze stagnates on the multihued pixels of the television. He can feel Dream's eyes on him, a weighted brand between his shoulder blades, but lets boredom suffuse his features instead of characteristic annoyance.

"Could've warned me that the whole gang would be here, Sap," Dream says, voice crisp and dry as the curled edges of brittle winter leaves.

George can hear the alpha pattering around behind him, heavy steps followed by the jangle of keys as Dream undoubtedly tosses them into a basket for safekeeping. It's an effort not to tense as he comes to view, stepping in front of the couch with his arms crossed over his broad chest. The others grumble as Dream's movement momentarily blocks the television screen.

Sapnap rips his eyes from the game with a frown, the slight scent of salted annoyance cutting through the air. "I told you that they were coming, dumbass. Besides, you were out for most of the day anyway, so it doesn't really matter."

"What?" Dream sneers a little, lips curving to expose the pearlescent gleam of his canines. "So I don't get to participate in this little play date?"

This time Quackity chimes in, dark hair slipping over his forehead and denim shifting at his wrist as he balances his arm on an upraised knee. "If by *participating* you mean beating Sapnap's ass in every conceivable game—then feel free to join in our little play date."

Sapnap grumbles in protest at the insult, nudging Quackity with an elbow. The other beta just sticks out his tongue.

George supposes he should be glad that Dream's eyes are locked on the two idiots, because it allows him free reign to observe the alpha without his palpable distaste being apparent.

The first thing he notices is Dream's attire. Gone are the soft, white tee and comfortable lounge pants that he'd worn when George met him. Those clothes must have been solely limited to the walls of this apartment, because what he wears now is a sharp contrast to the stretchy, gentle material.

A faded band tee stretches over Dream's chest, a granite hue that contrasts with the flush of golden skin as it peeks above the neckline. The letters are in a buttery yellow, peeling and almost indistinguishable from the rest of the cotton. Any logo or name is shrouded by age or well-use, and George thinks that Dream probably doesn't even know the name of the band that he's flaunting on his chest.

Fucking poser.

What's worse is that when Dream laughs at something Sapnap says—some presumably stupid, inane remark—his shirt shifts. There's a goddamn fist-sized hole in the bottom of the cotton, wide enough for a flash of golden skin to bare itself to the cool air. The ridges of his abdomen are taut with muscle, sturdy in comparison to George's leaner build. He can just make out a tantalizing swirl of ink over his hip bone, dark shadows disappearing under faded cotton.

It's enough to make George scowl, imagining his whole torso shrouded with seductive curls of onyx.

Good, George thinks, mouth pursed in a stubborn line. He hopes that Dream's bank account is

drained dry from the tattoos. It certainly explains why he can't be bothered to wear a shirt that isn't faded or gaping with massive holes.

Dream shifts, socked feet sinking into the carpet as he nods at something Quackity says. Voices play in the back of his mind like distant static as Dream's fingers reach down to the frayed fabric over his abdomen. The alpha lazily scratches at the tawny spattering of hair that leads into the waistband of his pants, dark denim stretching over muscled thighs.

Silver gleams at the deft movement, a polished shine of the countless rings that adorn Dream's knuckles. Of course the alpha would be the type to wear them constantly, George sneers. He's probably trying to get strangers to fantasize about those hands, the strength that runs through those tan fingers, the veins that trail like delicate spiderwebs against the warm skin.

Yes, George can imagine Dream chatting up some pretty omega, hand wrapped around a glass of piss-poor beer to better show off those rings—as if the silver gleam of his piercings alone isn't enough to entice some weak-willed idiot. His fingers would flex against the cool glass, condensation dripping down warm skin as the shards of metal at the base of his knuckles would clink.

He can imagine Dream using those same rings to bracket a pretty windpipe, imprints of blooming purple and red pressed against pale skin. The other alpha would relish the casual power of it, fingers tightening as he bent to nip at the silky expanse below his grasp. He'd leave behind crescent moons and teeth marks, a possessive bite for every greedy clutch of his fist, every driving thrust from powerful hips.

It makes George's mouth run dry. With disgust, he tells himself.

And perhaps thinking about Dream's stupid hands and his insufferable proclivities was a mistake, because George can almost imagine that scene. He can almost smell the omega on Dream, a faint cloying scent of bubblegum that clings to that godforsaken band tee until it makes George bristle.

He can imagine delicate fingers trailing over the soft cotton, lily-white and reverent, *worshipping* as they graze over the golden expanse of Dream's abdomen. Lower.

He can imagine Dream meeting that nameless omega's mouth, pushing until the other collapses against a brick wall or a wooden table or silken sheets in complete submission. Something that George would never let himself do. He'd never let that sinful mouth tenderly uncover his secrets—whining and panting and moaning all the while like a bitch in heat.

No, George is better than that.

It's not that all omegas are prone to submission, to slack-jawed pleasure, slick spilling from rosebud holes only to guide the way for a larger cock, a heated knot. George knows sharp-mouthed omegas who put him in his place time and time again.

But he knows that biology can be a cruel master. Even though being an omega isn't a bad thing, George finds himself thanking the stars that he presented as an alpha in high school, that his scent had deepened and he'd gone into a rut—no matter how torturous it had been at the time.

Unlike the sweet-tongued omegas that Dream probably favored, George would never submit. Especially not to an alpha like Dream.

And when he trails his gaze upwards to confirm that suspicion of bubblegum and saccharine sweet lips, he finds it. Because just underneath the shadow of his collarbone is a fresh hickey.

It's tinted a lurid reddish-purple, and George would be shocked that he missed it if he didn't make a point to steadfastly avoid Dream's face at all times. There's only one, a splotch of blueberry juice against otherwise unblemished skin, but who knows how many more might lie underneath those disgustingly worn clothes.

It makes bile pool in George's mouth, his nose wrinkle in disgust. But as his eyes trail over Dream's neck once more, he finds no evidence of bite marks. And he thinks for some reason that Dream's mating gland is perfectly, pristinely bare of any claim.

"Something the matter?" A cool voice interrupts George's musings of bite marks and bruises.

George looks up to find Dream's unerring gaze on him, flecks of jasper threaded through jade. Quackity and Sapnap cackle, undoubtedly amused that George spaced out, but Dream ignores them.

"You like what you're seeing?" the alpha adds, a brow cocked in an infuriating curve.

Lightning flares in George's veins and he knows that his scent is getting thicker, but he can't stop himself. The urge to put his fist through Dream's teeth is insurmountable, and George grits his molars in a futile attempt to suppress the feeling.

He lets his gaze drag over the gleaming column of Dream's throat, the cords of muscle at his arms, the thighs that shift underneath dark denim—before meeting the other alpha's gaze.

"Hardly," George says with a snarl of his own, injecting as much venom into the words as possible. "That shirt looks like it's seen better days."

But Dream, damn him, just looks amused.

"As if yours is any better," he snorts, metal piercing stretching his bottom lip and glinting in the afternoon light until George wants to take it between his teeth and rip it forcibly off.

But the comment succeeds in making him look down, observing his clothing with an outsider's eyes. The navy sweater over his skin is oversized, clinging to his wrists and hips in a soft fall of dark blue. George didn't bother to put a shirt underneath, the soft fleece instead tickling his skin and making him regret the relentless warmth when Dream's considering gaze is now fixated on him.

He knows how he looks—the baggy cotton making him seem smaller, the navy color making his eyes limpid and bringing out the roses of his skin.

But fuck that.

Clothing doesn't designate whether someone is an omega or otherwise. George is already an alpha, he doesn't need to prove it to anyone else, especially Dream. He can wear whatever he likes—he can knot and fuck and bite as well as any of them.

So he doesn't try to hide the sharpness of his canines behind his sneer, the threatening rise of his scent as he meets Dream's eyes dead on.

The glittering amusement that he finds there is what pushes him over the edge.

"At least I don't look like a strung-out *whore*."

Quackity bursts into laughter, wild cackling filling the air with the scent of split cherry slushies on

garish orange counters. For what it's worth, Sapnap toes the line between full-blown amusement and a half-hearted defense of his roommate.

But when George looks at Dream, his focus narrowing onto a pinpoint of heated attention, the other alpha's amusement is all gone. A crude facsimile is left behind, the barest dregs that twist his lips into a cruel curve and undoubtedly mingle with shared dislike.

Dream remains remarkably collected, hands staying loose over his clothing and legs positioned lazily apart. The only betrayals of his composure are the pulse thudding rapidly at the side of his neck, and his scent.

Wildfires spark with reckless abandon behind flinty eyes, the heavy scent of musk and charred pine settling over George like a thousand pounds of alpha aggression. But George doesn't flinch, letting his own scent rise to challenge Dream's own. Monsoon winds and bitter rain battle against open flame, a tantalizing combination that has George salivating with something he thinks might be bloodlust.

It's absurd, as he usually has his biology controlled, scent kept on a tight leash and instincts tampered down to not impede others. But he supposes that Dream brings out the worst in him.

The other alpha stands above him, but George isn't cowed, chin defiantly tilted up even when Dream's lips part. "That's the only thing you object to? My clothes?"

His leer is audacious, and George can almost hear the unspoken words.

I can take them off for you, if that would make it better.

He's suddenly lost for words, cheeks flushing despite his best attempts to reign in traitorous capillaries. George means to protest, to spit out sharp-edged shrapnel—that he wouldn't let Dream touch him with a ten foot pole and would rather rinse his eyes with bleach than look at him naked.

"I object to *that* and the fact that you stink of omega," is what comes out instead.

It takes a second for the words to process, but Dream's knowing smile is a thing of nightmares. When George glances over at Sapnap and Quackity, the two idiots are wide-eyed, gazes bouncing back and forth between him and Dream as if watching a ping-pong match. He even catches Quackity shoving a fistful of popcorn into his mouth, the fucker.

When his attention turns back to Dream, the other alpha's eyes are glittering with malevolence. He looms over him, arms crossed over his chest and his piercing gleaming and tawny hair falling over his forehead and tattoos creeping up his neck until George can hardly *breathe* from the anger and infuriating scent that suffocates him.

"I never took you to be prejudiced, Georgie," Dream croons, knife-sharp amusement coating the cruel curve of his lips, the threatening flex of those ring-studded fingers against his arms.

A bursting supernova of indignation fills his chest, a dying star of heated protest rising to his lips. How *dare* Dream stand there and suggest that, with his cocksure attitude and know-it-all smirk.

George gives as good as he gets.

"Don't call me that," he says hotly. "And I'm not prejudiced, you blind-eyed fool. It's just that the thought of *anyone* doing *anything* with you is utterly repulsive."

By Dream's stoic expression, George assumes that he's hitting all the right nerves. "I feel bad for

them,” he can’t resist adding. “Knowing that you probably have no idea how to satisfy anyone but yourself.”

George sneers, making the curve of his lips cold and dark, a mirror to Dream’s own. His pointed attention makes George aware of how the other alpha’s fists clench, pulse ticking up and teeth gritting. It makes him all too aware of how Dream’s tongue runs over his chapped lower lip, moistening the tender skin before he spits out beautiful poison.

“Don’t cast your shortcomings on me,” glowers Dream, his eyes dark beneath lowered brows. When George opens his mouth to issue a stinging rebuttal, Dream interrupts. “You have an issue with me having a bit of meaningless fun?”

Dream raises a brow, punctuating the question. Something in George’s chest loosens at the admission of the flowered bruise and cloying scent being *meaningless*. He thinks it’s indigestion.

“I have an issue with *you*.”

The words hang in the air, suspended like the motes of dust caught in a ray of afternoon sunshine.

“Yeah?” Dream grins, and George has the slight sense to be slightly apprehensive as his smile turns wicked. “You have an issue with how I treat my partners? Leave them begging for more, craving the feel of me buried between their thighs?”

George tenses, the blatant challenge ringing in his ears. If he were braver, he would think of it as a promise. But George isn’t weak-willed, and would never stoop so low as to beg for *Dream*.

He opens his mouth to reply, eyes narrowed to slits, before Sapnap cuts him off. “Gross,” the beta whines pitifully, hands clasped over his ears. “Go take your pheromones and alpha posturing somewhere else.” Sapnap opens his eyes to glare at Dream, adding: “And shut up about your conquests, no one wants to hear it.”

Before Dream or George can say anything, Quackity pipes in with a waggle of his brows. “At least he’s getting some, unlike a couple people here.”

George’s skin grows cold at the unwitting admission and can’t stop himself from turning to glare at Quackity, his reaction even more telling than the taunting statement in the first place.

And when George looks back, Dream’s smile grows pointed, turning soft and deadly. “Oh, so *that’s* what it is.” The words are drenched in milk and honey, midnight silk and the slick lube adorning rosette-flushed holes. Lowering his voice, he croons, “My poor, unsatisfied little alpha.”

The words are like a knife’s edge—mocking, dripping with vitriol, and deadly sharp. “I’m not your *anything*,” George blurts out, mouth tightening in anger.

Dream’s lazy, proprietary sweep of him, from head to toe, is answer enough.

This time, George really does see red. Thankfully Sapnap’s quick response is enough to diffuse the temptation of bodily harm.

“Oh, come on,” Sapnap huffs on an exhausted exhale. He turns to look at Dream. “Are you hungry?”

And Dream, of course, is never one to let an opportunity pass by. He turns to leer at George, lascivious intent curling his lips. “*Starved*.”

Heat swarms across pale cheeks, coiling in the depths of his stomach. George is glad that he has the pillow underneath his back to ground him, to prevent from ripping Dream from neck to navel.

Sapnap cuts in, sharp and precise. “Good.” He’s annoyed, George can tell. “Then you wouldn’t mind going to the kitchen and heating up the frozen pizzas in the freezer.” When Dream shifts an incredulous gaze at him, Sapnap adds, “For *all* of us.”

George has the pleasure of seeing Dream complain all for a minute before Sapnap turns to him. “You too, George.”

“What? Why me?”

Sapnap’s head pushes against the couch as he sighs before waving a tired hand. “Just fuck off, both of you. Go argue in the kitchen—let me play my goddamn video game.”

“I don’t see why it takes two people to heat up a pizza,” George mumbles sullenly before standing up nonetheless.

He immediately regrets it when Dream stands in front of him, grinning. That earlier plaintiveness is completely gone, replaced by a cheeky smile that makes George want to punch him directly in those perfect teeth.

The scent of flickering flames is stronger now, a heady, rich scent that makes him want to close his eyes and luxuriate in the beckoning warmth. It makes George stare defiantly up at Dream instead.

Again, he curses their height difference. It’s not that George is short—he’s the average height for an alpha at least. It’s just that Dream is freakishly *tall*.

His pride barely lets George admit that Dream is a good few inches above him, but it’s apparent in the breadth of those golden shoulders, the length of those strong legs. The other alpha’s stupid height probably does come from those freakishly long legs, George thinks venomously.

The extra few inches give Dream the opportunity to loom down on George, curling hair and defined jaw and glittering eyes open for his perusal. Even the way he stands, arms crossed over his chest and shoulders straining the material of his shirt, is pure *alpha*.

It should probably make George feel bad about himself, hyper aware of his own body alongside Dream’s. But it doesn’t, even though he hardly has the height or absurd strength associated with being an alpha. Even the fact that he’s been mistaken as a beta—and even an omega—before doesn’t cause him to feel shame.

Because George knows that he can be vicious when required, drawing upon that goddamn alpha posturing to stand his ground and bare his teeth at any asshole that provokes him. He knows that he can handle other alphas. He knows that he can handle Dream.

So George stands imperiously, absentmindedly thinking that he has the perfect height to lay his teeth at the other’s golden throat, to bite until he submits.

Dream doesn’t seem to realize it, still grinning down at George like an addled idiot swayed by their first lick at moonshine. That insufferable jade gaze is fixated on something that George doesn’t realize—until he looks down.

His previous sprawl on the couch had shifted his sweater until the navy cotton pools below his collarbones, exposing creamy skin to a gluttonous gaze. George hurriedly tugs the fabric up, bristling at Dream’s huffed laugh. His breath tickles against a pale cheek and George flushes. In

anger.

Hardly sparing the alpha a glance, George turns on his heels, eager to let greasy cheese and sweet tomato sauce obliterate the desire to bite Dream's bottom lip until it bleeds. The scent of embers is left behind, and George ignores how rude it is to lead someone else around their own house. Dream doesn't deserve any courtesy, in his opinion.

Besides, it doesn't seem to dissuade the other alpha. Dream follows close behind. George can hear heavy footsteps and feel his presence, brushing the back of his sweater into sensitive skin and tickling the curling hairs at his nape.

No matter how much it irritates him to have his back to Dream, George persists, keeping his gaze firmly fixated forwards and arms loose by his sides as he tries to find the freezer.

He vaguely remembers the location of the kitchen from Sapnap's failed attempt to bake brownies—he'd held up the goopy mess to George's unimpressed gaze. (And to think that he wanted to make *weed* brownies in the first place.)

Dream steps behind him as he enters the tiled room. George glosses over the bowl of fruit—undoubtedly Dream's influence because *god knows* why Sapnap has an aversion to anything healthy—and stops in front of the refrigerator. His hip presses against a wooden table, bare but clean enough, he supposes.

"What are you waiting for?" Dream asks, brows furrowed and lips pursed.

Afternoon light paints Dream in shades of rich gold, like the stupid globs of color that Renaissance artists mixed on their little wooden palettes. It makes George more snappish than usual, tearing his eyes away from how Dream's hair and skin are practically *made* for the sun.

"It's *your* house," he says waspishly.

"Didn't stop you from coming here," Dream mutters under his breath before thankfully complying.

A cold blast of freezer air hits George's face as he pulls a pizza from the fridge. The yellow-tinted light illuminates Dream's face briefly before he lets the door shut. George gets a glimpse of the pizza box before Dream opens it and tosses the empty cardboard in the trash, placing the contents on the table.

Barbecue chicken. The pizza is decorated with chunks of meat and cheese, purple onions decorating it all. George wrinkles his nose slightly. Leave it to Sapnap to choose the weirdest combinations he can find.

"What do we do now?"

George is interrupted from his disgust by Dream's question, and can't help the incredulous look that he sends in response.

"Have you never made a frozen pizza before?" The plastic-covered circle of dough sits on the wooden table innocuously, and George gapes.

Dream's eyes narrow. "Have you?"

"Yes."

"Oh." Dream flushes. George strangely wants to trail his fingers over the rosy skin left in the wake

of his embarrassment. He quickly replaces *that* particular desire with the urge to smack Dream clean across the face. Familiarity and all that tripe.

“You do know how to read, right? Or is that too much for you? There are instructions on the back.”

Dream sighs but grunts an affirmation, digging the box out of the trash and flipping it over. George leans his hip against the table while Dream puzzles it out. Head bent and golden light streaming over the hint of ink at his collarbone, Dream looks like an entirely different person.

Finally he straightens, deft fingers putting the cardboard box back in the trash with a sigh.

“I don’t eat frozen pizzas,” Dream tries to start again, explaining himself. “They’re Sapnap’s. He goes crazy for them and buys a couple every week. Can’t cook for himself, the bastard.”

Dream’s voice is warm, fingers tapping at the rough grain of the table. George tries to ignore the beckoning gleam of the silver rings and lets himself smile at the thought of Sapnap rummaging through cold grocery store aisles to find the pizza. But it soon fades when he’s reminded who he stands with.

They’re standing too close, Dream’s heat palpable from their few inches of distance. And those jade eyes linger over George’s smile in a way that makes him uncomfortable, like the other alpha wants to get under his skin and make him *tick*.

“What, and you do all the cooking?” George sneers a little, letting incredulity drench his words in the gold paint that adorns tan knuckles. “Dream the health nut.”

“I make good food,” Dream protests. There’s a line between his brows, quickening anger that makes George’s veins spark with heat. “Sure it won’t clog your arteries, but I bet even *you* will like it.”

“I don’t give a fuck.”

“*You* asked.”

“I’m regretting it,” George sighs.

Dream laughs disbelievingly, leaning back with his arms crossed over his chest.

“You’re an asshole.”

“Likewise. Now take off the plastic and find something to put the pizza on.”

Apparently Dream doesn’t have aluminum foil like a *normal* person would use, so George is forced to grab some kind of wooden chopping block that he doesn’t *think* would burn. Besides, the authentic pizza places probably use something similar, he rationalizes.

He watches as Dream tears away the loose film of plastic from the dough, double checking the temperature for the oven before gingerly settling it inside the blistering warmth. George supposed he didn’t fuck up anything vital, because the pizza emerges fifteen minutes later—golden brown and the crust only the slightest bit burnt.

“Look,” George coos as Dream attempts to pull the dough from the oven, wincing at the gust of hot air that blows against his face. “Dream’s first *pizza*.”

The words are intended to be mocking, and the other alpha clearly realizes it because he scoffs a little but says nothing. George is strangely disappointed.

He makes Dream go through the trouble of cutting it into even slices (they don't have a cutter and as an excuse, George says that he doesn't know where the knives are—when what he really means is that he doesn't trust himself with Dream and sharp objects in the same vicinity). Although he gripes when Dream makes a slice slightly smaller than the others (*Look, that will be yours, George*), he doesn't have many complaints.

The smell of the pizza must make its way to the living room, because Quackity raises his voice to yell. "Smells good!"

"Yeah," George can't resist shouting back. "And none of it's for you."

Dream chuckles a little at that, but shuts up when confronted with George's stare. Despite his statement, George brings a stack of four plates while the other alpha carries the steaming amalgamation of dough and cheese to the living room table.

"Here," Dream announces, setting it squarely in the middle of the varnished wood, much to Quackity and Sapnap's delighted gazes. "Your highnesses," he adds sarcastically.

The two betas immediately dive for a piece, yelping when they burn their tongues but ignoring the plates that George sets on the table. Heathens, he thinks, grabbing a plate and a slice for himself. Dream, he notices, is quick to grab another plate from underneath the one that George took.

Living room silent but for the sound of munching, George positions himself towards the end of the couch, sinking into plush pillows once more. Dream is already halfway done with his slice, and sits cross legged next to the coffee table. George thinks that he looks oddly endearing, head tilted up to catch the slipping cheese.

His stare is quickly noticed when Dream tears a chunk of crust from the pizza, eyes shifting over to watch George.

"What?" the other alpha asks, quizzically raising his brows.

"You eat like a beast," George says, neatly finishing his last bite. It's true, Dream folds the pizza in half lengthwise, taking no time to savor each bite. A bit of sauce adorns his bottom lip, stark against the rosy skin. George supposes it's one more thing he hates about Dream.

"Fuck off." He swallows around a mouthful of bread and sauce. "I'm *starved*." Even with tomato sauce on his tongue, he manages to leer. George flushes at the lascivious reminder, eyes traitorously dipping to Dream's mouth. Pizza grease coats his bottom lip, casting a glossy shine that George's lewd mind immediately seizes and runs with.

But he shakes his head to clear the thought, a scowl coming to his lips at the infuriating arrogance lining the other's features. "No one cares."

"I beg to differ," Dream mumbles around his second slice.

George chooses not to answer.

The pizza is finished quickly, Quackity complaining about the eclectic flavor but enjoying it nonetheless. Sapnap is forced to clean it up and do the dishes, despite his muttered protests (*I didn't use a plate, why do I have to wash everything*). George reclines on the couch, feet almost touching Quackity's hip. Dream still sprawls on the floor, and they both watch the beta race laps in

Coconut Mall.

George feels languid, peaceful—not even Dream’s lingering presence could ruin it for him. When Sapnap returns, smelling of soap bubbles and rippling waves, he plops himself directly onto George’s legs. The alpha hisses, kicking him off with an annoyed frown.

But Sapnap doesn’t seem to care, flashing a stupid grin at George before stretching his arms over the back of the couch.

“We’ve got to come over to your place for our next game night. C’mon, George,” Sapnap pleads. His hazel eyes are bright and his fingers curl beseechingly.

George knows that Sapnap would most likely wreck his flat given the chance, and promptly voices the opinion. “Like hell. You’ll probably find a way to break everything that you touch, and I don’t fancy having to buy a whole new set of plates. Or a television.”

The shock that darkens Sapnap’s eyes is over exaggerated. “George, you don’t trust me? Surely you’re not hiding skeletons in there. Or a freaky sex dungeon.” He makes a face. “On second thought...”

“Definitely the latter,” Quackity chimes in with a little grin.

George knows that the two of them won’t relent until he agrees to the suggestion. Sapnap is too stubborn, and Quackity will go along with whatever causes the most chaos. If agreeing will put out George’s misery, so be it.

“Fine, you can come over next week,” he groans, chin dipping down in defeat. Sapnap cheers before stopping, tilting his head towards Dream in a dreadfully unsubtle maneuver.

For what it’s worth, Dream is picking at his nails and fiddling with a gleaming ring, boredom suffusing his features.

“Dream, you can come too,” George grits out, words stilted.

When Dream meets his eyes, his features are set in a mask of faux boredom. “I’ll consider it,” he drawls out, perfectly bland. The piercing is stark against the rose-red of his lips, and the fading afternoon light turns his hair into spools of flaxen gold.

George honestly doesn’t know why he bothered. He supposes that the indifferent response is going to be the best that he’ll get. Turning back to Sapnap, he challenges, “What are we doing next? I have the violent urge to kick your ass in something.”

The beta chortles. “As if *that* will ever happen, old man.”

They bicker for a few minutes, Quackity soon joining in. George is aware of Dream’s eyes on him, dark and heady, but doesn’t have the courage to return the gaze. He does his best to ignore the other alpha for the rest of the night, discarding the way their fingers brush when reaching for another bowl of popcorn that Quackity had prepared.

It’s difficult but George manages, escaping the apartment without his traitorous pulse ratcheting too much at the scent of smoke and embers.

George’s promise to invite the others into his apartment hasn’t been cashed in yet. He supposes

that he's lucky to escape Sapnap's whining for several weeks—they've all been busy.

Managing an important project at work, George's days consist of sending painfully formal emails and cleaning up after his team, who *somehow* managed to botch up a file transfer that they should've mastered during their first year at the workplace. That, when combined with writing his senior thesis, has him working to the bone. He thinks that he's eaten microwaveable ramen for dinner three days in a row.

Quackity is also buried in pounds of paper and ink—a legal quagmire that George doesn't envy in the slightest. He supposes he should admire the beta's determination to stick through law school, but the idea of his friend as a lawyer gives him chills. The idea of Quackity being in charge of *anything* gives him chills.

Sapnap has spent the last couple weeks slogging through his last batch of finals. Chemistry is a pain in the ass, as he's often said, and benzene rings often grace the beta's Snap Story along with a myriad of skull emojis. George knows that he's also busy with a certain sandy-haired barista. However, his time commitments have never stopped him from enticing George to play a late-night round of Valorant. Like an idiot, George always agrees, waking up with a headache and dark circles the morning after.

As for Dream—well, George doesn't exactly know what the alpha has been up to. He apparently works for some posh financial firm, so George can only assume that he's currently busy with stagflation or the abysmal state of the stock market or god knows what. George only figured out *that* particular tidbit of Dream's life after catching him ironing a white button-down the last time he came over to visit Sapnap.

It's hard to imagine that any respectable company would take *Dream*, but he supposes that with the tattoos concealed by starched fabric and the lip piercing removed, the alpha would be suitable for the workplace. Sometimes, the image of him in dark slacks and a leather belt is loath to leave George's mind, and he convinces himself that it's due to how stupid Dream would look in formal attire.

George also manages to wheedle Dream's other occupations from Sapnap. (Keep your friends close and enemies closer and all that.) He finds that the alpha regularly manages to coax Sapnap from chemistry long enough to play *football* of all things. Apparently, Dream was a quarterback in undergrad, and the hobby carried over.

The thought of Dream in a jersey, shirt sticking to his broad chest, hair damp with sweat, and muscled thighs in obscenely short pants, is enough to make George scowl.

So yes, he has some idea of what Dream's up to.

He's seen the alpha a handful of times in the past couple weeks—in a cafe when they all arranged a coffee break and Sapnap dragged Dream along, and in the library when Quackity forced everyone to join him and study (*If I have to suffer, you all will suffer with me*).

The brief meetings all have something in common: George and Dream argue incessantly.

It usually starts small—Dream tapping his pen in mindless concentration or George's spoon clinking against his cup when stirring oatmilk into his coffee. Then it snowballs, the other bringing up the minor annoyance and blowing it out of proportions.

George knows that he's guilty of it too, but there's something so *satisfying* about seeing Dream's face flush, his scent flare in something that must be anger. And Dream gives as good as he gets,

with venomous words that never fail to make George's skin tingle, his lip peel back from his teeth.

The last time they got into a row like that resulted in the whole group being kicked out from a coffee shop (*It was the third such place that they'd tried—they've been kicked out from the previous ones, too*). It's just that Dream is so *easy* to rile up. It's not George's *fault* that he takes everything so seriously.

But their past few meetings feature Sapnap looking more and more fed up and Quackity more and more amused. So it shouldn't really come as a shock to open his door, expecting to see them both for the promised game night, and only to be met with Dream instead.

"Where's Sapnap?"

The irritation in George's voice isn't feigned. He's already laid out the chips and dip on the coffee table (some weird spinach concoction that the beta adores) and chosen a stack of movies that Quackity shouldn't object to.

Although he invited Dream over, he didn't actually think that the alpha would come—especially after the last screaming match they'd had over the most stupid of topics: pineapple on pizza (George was for it, and Dream was against. He argued that Dream was a boring, staid shell of a human being, and Dream countered that George was a high-maintenance, insufferable brat to be around. Perhaps George went *slightly* overboard).

But George's question isn't well-received; Dream bristles but answers with a twist of his lips. "Sapnap says that he's feeling sick."

George normally wouldn't take Dream's words at face value, but the arch of a tawny brow dares him to confirm with Sapnap. George grits his teeth, but doesn't make a move to reach his phone.

"And Quackity?"

"I dunno." Dream shrugs, insouciant in the worst way. "He said that he's running late from a study meet. Are you going to let me in or should I dawdle on your doorstep?"

George flushes at the reminder, stepping back to let the door swing inward a little more. "Fine. Feel free to wait in the living room and entertain yourself until Quackity gets here."

Dream gives an infuriating little snort but passes George to enter the apartment without comment. For a moment, George is stunned by his heat, his *scent* before regaining control. After hours spent glaring at Dream over cups of coffee or textbooks, it's only natural to be put off by the other alpha's proximity, he reasons.

Shutting the door with a quiet click, he warily follows Dream into the living room, feeling as if he were an outsider in his own house. It gives George a chance to survey the alpha without a snarky comment or infuriating grin, and he takes the opportunity to rake his gaze across Dream's back.

Muscles shift underneath *another* ridiculous band tee, and George can perhaps see the remnants of a physique once suited for football. Because although Dream's shoulders are broad, straining the dark cotton swathed across his torso, his hips are narrow. Clad in another set of onyx denim, he moves smoothly, like George imagines a panther would.

And perhaps the comparison isn't too far off considering that they both are predators—George can smell the smoking pine and scattered embers of an alpha even from his position several feet away.

Maybe George has gotten used to the scent, but Dream's pheromones aren't as insufferable as he

originally thought. It curls across his palate, settling tendrils of fire-flecked forests and pungent greenery across his scent glands. Despite himself, George shudders, eyeing the graceful sway of Dream's body as he plops himself onto the couch with his lashes fluttering closed.

From this angle, George is treated to an even better view. Head tipped back against the cushions, Dream's neck is bared in a way that's practically *indecent*. His scent gland is exposed, along with a tantalizing swath of dark ink, and George is pleased to say that his neck is delightfully bare of any hickeys.

That's not to say that he doesn't feel the urge to sink his teeth at the base of Dream's throat. Because he still does—yearns to leave a brand of crimson and plum in a possessive claim of dominance. In this way, at least, he'll finally show Dream which one of them is superior. Finally put an end to that disgustingly smart mouth, stop the dripping venom that never fails to make George see red.

But with Dream's eyes closed, George lets his imagination wander. Why limit himself to just Dream's throat? He bets that a silver piercing would be cool between his teeth, easily warmed with lascivious flicks of his tongue. George could leave bite marks on those pretty pink lips, relishing the crushing promise of poppy and copper.

Would Dream make any sounds? Would he submit, careless whimpers strewn like rose petals on a blushing bride's wedding aisle? Or would he resist, lips bruising as they seek to inflict stinging blooms of color onto George's own skin? By the ratcheting pulse of his heartblood, George certainly knows what he'd prefer.

Cheeks blooming with tell-tale spots of color, George realizes that he's been staring at Dream on the couch for a few minutes now, standing there and wringing his hands like a useless *idiot*.

And what's worse is that he realizes Dream is looking *back*. His eyes are slitted, framed by honey-colored lashes that catch the light from the fading sunset through George's stained blinds. But he makes no move, the only motion is his chest rising up and down in a metronomic rhythm.

They just stare at each other, a growing band of tension winding through the air, poised to snap. George tries not to look at the elegant fall of tawny hair across the alpha's forehead, the way his long legs are stretched out in front of him. He focuses on the smaller details: the rougher patch of skin on the base of Dream's thumb where a ring rests, the fraying denim material that clings to the curve of his thighs, the way his shoes lie in a neat row beside the couch because he doesn't want to get George's floors dirty.

These little details are meant to ground him, to deconstruct Dream into an amalgamation of bad habits and preferences that George can disdain. But it doesn't work. Instead, his breath is caught in his throat, something that feels like a glistening soap bubble rising to fill his chest. It's too much, all too soon.

And without explanation, he rushes from the room with trembling fingertips and a renewed urge to completely *unravel* the alpha that sprawls in his living room.

The kitchen is dimly lit, and George sits on the counter—between a box of Cheerios and a bowl of fruit (Dream's health obsession inspired him, *alright?*)—and fishes his phone from his back pocket. He unlocks it with an impatient swipe of his fingers, calling the second number in his contacts before listening to the abysmal tone of dull ringing.

When the other person on the line picks up, George doesn't wait a second. "Where are you?" he growls out.

Quackity just laughs in response, distorted and tinny through the phone. “I’m driving, George.”

George can indeed hear the sound of distant whooshing, wind pressing against glass panes and the faint sound of honking. “To our apartment, right?” he asks desperately.

“No, to Aruba,” Quackity deadpans.

“Fuck off. *Seriously*, where are you?”

A car honks and Quackity curses before replying. “What makes you think I’m lying?”

“The fact that it’s an island and you have finals next week,” George deadpans before switching gears. “But seriously, Quackity. How could you leave me alone with *Dream*? How am I meant to get through the afternoon without strangling him, I already—”

Quackity cuts him off, an insufferable sigh filtering through the phone and making George wince. “That’s exactly the problem, idiot. *I* think that you guys arguing is funny as hell, but Sapnap is whining and I’d prefer to not get thrown out of every coffee shop that we frequent.”

“But—” George gapes, marble countertop cold underneath his fingers.

“No,” Quackity reaffirms, tone uncharacteristically serious. “Sapnap and I aren’t coming, so you’re going to sit your pretty little ass down and figure it out between you two. I don’t want you leaving the apartment without reaching some kind of truce.” Quackity pauses a little, smile creeping into his voice. “Consider this an intervention. Good luck.”

George is stunned when he hangs up, silence filling his ears. Numb fingers place his phone on the counter before moving to sweep the hair from his eyes. He never thought that Sapnap and Quackity could be so *underhanded*, but supposes that there’s always a time to be proven wrong.

Swallowing to get rid of the sandpaper edge to his throat, George creeps back to the living room.

“I suppose Quackity isn’t coming?” Dream opens his eyes and asks in a voice rich with amusement.

His tone is smug, and George grits his teeth.

“No,” he says shortly, still standing in front of Dream on the couch. It’s a reversal of the position they were in a few weeks ago, and he huffs as he remembers Dream’s taunting. “Do you have anything you want to do?”

Dream shrugs, annoying to the end. His scent fills the air as he speaks. “Not particularly. It’s *your* house.”

George clenches his fists at the reminder of his own words before taking a deep inhale. “I have some dvds here, we could watch something.”

Dream stretches, grumbling under his breath. “What, are we in the stone ages?” But after a moment of consideration, he agrees, thankfully saving George a headache. “Which ones do you have?”

Then comes the arduous chore of agreeing on a movie. Dream is determined to be stubborn. He rejects every proposal with an obnoxious shake of his head, sandy strands of hair flying every which way.

George, crouched by the television, is increasingly annoyed. Even taking deep breaths and attempting to control his racing heartbeat isn't working, and he offers another movie through gritted teeth.

"What about *High School Musical*?"

"Are we five?" Dream snorts, blowing at the hair in front of his eyes, too lazy to move it with his hand.

"No," George frowns, looking at the plastic case in his hands. "Sapnap recommended this to me for some reason. Never knew he was into it."

"Who knows with Sapnap," Dream mutters, and George feels a brief moment of camaraderie before he opens his mouth again. "Anyways, are we going to do something? You've got to be the worst host that I've ever seen."

The anger flooding through his veins is familiar, but they eventually settle on a *Star Wars* movie. George doesn't even like *Star Wars* that much.

He thinks that the worst is over when Dream leaves midway in the movie to heat up a package of popcorn that George left on the table. It was intended for Quackity, but George is still feeling vindictive from the phone call and doesn't say anything when Dream leaves.

He probably should have, though, because Dream spends the next twenty minutes trying (and failing) to throw popcorn in his mouth. The end credits of the movie are rolling, and George *swears* that Dream is trying to hit him with flying pieces of debris.

A kernel smacks him in the cheek, and George has officially lost it.

"What the fuck is your problem?" he asks, brows lowering.

George does his best to give the other alpha a murderous glare, but Dream just grins.

"Eating," he says, opening his mouth to expose half-chewed kernels.

George wrinkles his nose and sighs, frustrated. "We have to get along."

He should've known that Dream would never make things easy for him. The alpha tosses another handful of popcorn into his mouth, and George winces as half of it falls onto the couch. When he looks up, Dream offers a wolfish smile, a sharp gleam of pearly enameled teeth.

"What if I don't want to get along?"

"Why the fuck wouldn't you want to get along?"

"Maybe I like arguing with you," Dream shrugs, setting aside the popcorn bowl and looking straight into George's eyes as if to confirm the statement.

Heat rises up George's neck, and more than ever, he wants to make Dream eat those words.

"And do you argue with everyone like this?" George asks with a cruel sneer. "Even the pretty little omegas that you fuck?"

"I don't see how that's any of your business." The words are cold, but Dream says them as if they're an invitation.

And George can't take the taunt, red spooling into his vision as his hands curl into claws. "Make it my business," he challenges.

And Dream does.

The kiss is harsh, all teeth and nails and ferocious heat. George doesn't register it until it happens, until the taste of crackling embers is forced onto his tongue, delicious warmth that he wants for his own.

He's practically pinned against the arm of the couch, strong hands weaving through dark hair, *pulling* until it stings and George involuntarily moans into Dream's mouth. He can feel Dream grin, lips curving underneath his own, and George is suddenly furious.

Biting at Dream's lower lip like he's always wanted to do, he relishes the taste of salt and copper and butter. The piercing is cool against his tongue, and this time, it's *his* turn to make Dream moan as he takes it between his lips and tugs.

But Dream doesn't let him get away with it, readjusting himself to lean over George's body. He meets sensitive lips with his own, tongue tracing over the seam of George's mouth until it parts. Dream tastes like pure fire, something heady and burning with brilliant light.

George gasps as it takes his breath away, as Dream's tongue practically fucks into his mouth in a way that should be *sinful*.

His lips are undoubtedly swollen, colored a ripe cherry red, but George doesn't care. He gives as good as he gets, arm wrapping around Dream's neck to pull him even closer, to feel the body heat radiate through that stupid band tee and light George up from the insides.

He meets Dream's tongue with his own, tracing over the pearlescent teeth that he once wanted to punch. Now he thinks he's found a better use for that pretty mouth.

Tugging a plush bottom lip between his teeth, Dream groans onto George's skin, flickering embers and the growing scent of pheromones spilling into the air. It's intoxicating, and George can feel himself reacting, pulse ratcheting up to a thunderous beat and scent spilling heady in the air.

When Dream pulls back a moment for breath, his eyes are dilated. A thin ring of jade is ensnared by encompassing onyx, and the lust that he finds in that gaze is mirrored by his own. His lips are kiss-swollen, hair mussed from wandering hands and strewn across his forehead.

He looks utterly debauched, and George feels a perverse kind of pleasure to know that *he* was the one to do that, to coax ragged breaths from Dream's chest that fall onto his own collarbone like a sickle of wind. The glint of satisfaction must show because jade eyes narrow, shadowy lashes curving as the other alpha leans down to reconnect their lips.

This kiss is even harsher, if possible. It's filled with hours of taunting, vitriol and bitter comments spilt into the open air. George can taste Dream's anger on his tongue and *relishes* in it.

Spit glides between their mouths, and it should be disgusting if George weren't so aroused. He can feel the teeth imprints on his lower lip, the split skin that bleeds copper with lustful intention. He sets his nails against Dream's nape, little half-moons that are supposed to sting and leave behind pretty crimson. Dream seems to enjoy it, if his growing scent is any indication.

George *has* fucked with alphas before, but it's never been like *this*. Dream's scent is more addicting than anything he's ever known before, an intoxicating rush of pure heat that rivals any omega's saccharine sweet pheromones. It fills the air around them, thick and heavy until George

wants to *break* something.

He takes it out on Dream's mouth instead, licking into the hot warmth and relishing the growl that rumbles out of the alpha's chest. The noise makes him shudder, arousal coming to the forefront of his mind and forming against his hip. He's *hard*, leaking precum already, and George curses the fact that he'd chosen to wear restrictive denim instead of looser sweatpants.

Sparks fly in his vision as Dream settles in between his legs, grinding down once. He's unmistakably hard, too. Arousal flushes his cheeks, sends the scent of salt to fill the air until George wants to choke on it. When Dream does it again, he loses it.

A proper moan leaks into the air as he drives his hips up, desperately seeking friction that would settle the fervent thumping in his veins. He's throbbing in his pants, tip slick and wet already, and Dream's barely even touched him.

Hands scrabbling at a broad back, George tries to pull him down for *more*, little groans caught by Dream's lips. When he angles himself so that he ruts against the other alpha's arousal, Dream shudders, eyes opening and glinting dangerously. George does it again, *daring* him to do anything about it.

When he feels a calloused hand rest around his throat in warning, he wants to combust. His skull cracking on a moan, he leans into the touch, feeling scorching warmth sear onto his skin like a personal brand. The silver rings will undoubtedly leave marks, little bruises of purple, and another wave of arousal curls in his lower abdomen.

"Bedroom," he gasps, because all he wants is to tear Dream apart, sundering muscle and bone to expose the flame that lies beneath his skin.

"Yeah," Dream groans in response, tightening his fingers for one tantalizing second. They stumble off the couch together, lips reconnecting as if Dream can't bear to be apart from him for long.

The sensitivity flares tendrils of lightning down George's skin, and the fact that he has to stand on his *tiptoes* to meet Dream's mouth has never been arousing before until now.

He leads Dream to his bedroom, fumbling with the doorknob while the other sucks bruises onto pale skin. One particularly harsh one underneath his jaw makes George hiss, tilting his head back before ushering Dream into the small space.

He's immediately pulled into a messy kiss against the door. George is pinned back and snarling, teeth pulled away from his lips and cock tenting the front of his pants. Dream doesn't care, braving rough hands at his hips and plundering his mouth with sinful sweeps of his tongue. George shudders with every pass, twitching as Dream marks him up beyond compare.

It's satisfying, the person who was spitting venom at him twenty minutes ago now laying possessive claim over his lips, the delicate skin at his throat.

He's kissing *Dream*, George thinks.

Alpha, alpha, alpha, his mind croons.

"You like this, don't you?" Dream growls against his lips. It's as if he reaches directly into his mind, unspooling dark thoughts that tangle with need and heady desire.

It makes sense that George would still be annoyed by the alpha, even while kissing him, so he snaps back. "You're not half as good as you think," he pants, pulling back from Dream's mouth

with his own lips coated in a glossy layer of spit.

Dream's eyes darken at the sight and he steps forward, pinning George more securely to the door of his bedroom.

"Are you sure about that?" he rasps, words strewn with granite. "You seem to be *enjoying* it enough."

He brings up an indolent finger for emphasis, pointedly thumbing over the swell of George's bottom lip.

"Don't act like you're unaffected," George hisses. He snakes an arm between their bodies, palming over the front of heated denim with an intensity that makes Dream tip his head back and *groan*. His throat is exposed, tendrils of moon-shadow that George can't help but lean forward and trace with his tongue.

He uses the lines of Dream's tattoo as a guide, a coloring book to paint the angled strokes of golden skin with splotches of blooming pleasure. Dream moans through it all, breaths harsh and shuddering, fingers bruising around George's hips.

And George takes and takes and takes. Tastes and tastes and tastes.

Because Dream's skin is addictive, an elixir of potent fireblooms sending ropes of heat to curl over his abdomen, snowflakes of ash delicately settling over his skin. And George's scent, dulcet and heady and hedonistic in a way that it's never been before, blends seamlessly into it, until George can't tell where he ends and Dream begins.

"Fuck," he hisses onto golden skin. "*Fuck*."

Dream's grumbled laugh, low and breathy, is answer enough. "What did I say?" he murmurs, voice hitching as George suckles over his pulse point. "You *like* this."

His voice is smug, self-assured, and it drives George absolutely wild. He pulls back long enough to glare at him, amber meeting jade in a riotous display of anger. Dream's eyes are all pupil, mouth swollen like budding roses, and the sight of his clear arousal loosens George's tongue.

"And if I do?" he hisses, voice dark and sibilant, *daring* Dream to interject. "What if I told you that I *do* like this?"

Dream's hands are moon-sickles, clamping down on George's hips with enough ferocity to hurt. "Then I'd tell you to get on your knees," he murmurs silkily, desire flaring in the flats of his irises.

George jolts at the taunt, the unrestrained *challenge* that he sees in the other alpha's eyes. It's a reminder of what Dream thinks he deserves, the entitlement lining every hollow bone in his body with the gaudy shine of paste gems. Dream is arrogant, he's cocky, infuriating, and a thousand other things besides.

But this is the first time George admits to himself that the unwavering confidence makes his cock twitch.

He knows that Dream wants him to submit, to devolve into a mass of cracked moans and wanton whimpers. He wants George to beg for it, to sink to his knees and look up in starry adoration, pleading for a cock to fill his needy mouth. He wants George pliant, spit-slick and fucked out with a fluttering, pink hole like an omega bitch in heat.

But George excels in superseding expectations.

He has no intention of letting Dream have all the fun. He won't worship tattoo-inked skin, won't press reverent kisses along the inner curve of a muscled thigh. He won't let Dream slide clever fingers into trembling heat, at least not without scores of red marks raked onto broad shoulders. He won't let Dream take him however he wants, orgasm imminent and prompted by sugar-spun kisses.

If Dream wants all of him, George expects all of Dream in return.

He wants to see Dream unravel, head bowed back in pleasure that only *George* can give him. He wants to draw blood, ceaseless volatility bubbling in bite marks and bruises. He wants to tease Dream to the edge, compete with him in the cherry-forged lust of the bedroom.

Looking into those arousal-darkened eyes, he imagines the different ways to get Dream to submit. He wouldn't go down easy, strong hands and powerful thighs bunching as the alpha tries not to give in to overwhelming lust. Because Dream *is* an alpha, George's match in every way.

But there's a solution to everything, and George wonders if the precipice of victory would tip at his hands. His ass. His mouth.

He could sink onto Dream's cock, lube and hasty spit slicking him open while the heat of throbbing skin would drive him near the edge. He'd drive Dream crazy with minute rolls of eager hips, hole a fluttering vise of wet warmth drawing the other ever-closer to orgasm.

He could pin Dream down, mark him up with violet blueberries and streaks of plum. He wouldn't let up until the other alpha *begged* for it, cock pathetically untouched and leaking precum over the contours of a golden hip. Dream might even come from the frustration alone, back arching and creamy liquid spraying along the ridges of his abdomen.

George would lap every droplet of defeat with a rough tongue, caressing his swollen slit, the sensitive underside of his head with a beckoning irreverence. He might even coax Dream into a second orgasm, hips thrusting helplessly upward while a pale hand remains firm around his base, angry arousal leaking across his skin. He'd push the taste of it onto Dream's tongue, forcing him to confront the fact that it was George who brought him the world-shattering pleasure.

Or...

Perhaps Dream's suggestion has its own merit. There's a lot that George could do from his knees, least of all watch the other alpha unravel. Some may think it a loss of power, glossy eyes and spit-slick lips stretched open, the taste of salt and spend coating his mouth.

But George knows that it isn't. It gives him the chance to unravel desire at its seams, bursting silver thread lined with licentiousness and greed. He'd understand how to get Dream to tick, to bend, to *beg*—with every skillful movement of his tongue.

And to be honest, the thought of tasting Dream's heat, drinking in his groans and star-flecked pleasure... George thinks that he'd like it very much.

So without a word, he sinks to his knees, taking the chance to make Dream tremble, unravel the other man at a cellular level and expose his red-hot core. He relishes the surprise that flares in Dream's pupil, momentary shock deepening into neverending lust. Eyes flaring with defiance and hands braced on strong thighs, George looks up, venom spilling from prettily parted lips.

"This doesn't mean anything."

Dream laughs, low and dark. It sends a chill down George's spine despite itself, midnight pleasure cresting down to his tailbone.

"Sure it doesn't," comes the mocking response.

Despite gritted teeth and narrow eyes, George finds that he's *enjoying* himself. At least the view is pleasant, he thinks, heat seeping onto his palms through denim jeans. Dream is even taller from this angle, legs spread apart to accommodate George between them. His arousal is clearly apparent, a bulge in the dark material that clads his thighs. And his scent is even stronger from this position, George's brain lighting up like tinder in a firestorm.

Almost all coherent thought wiped from his mind, he's only aware of the jackrabbiting pulse in his throat, the insistent heat between his legs and in his stomach. Trembling fingers reach forward without pause, brushing rough material with enough intention to make it scald.

He chances a look upward, a final confirmation that this is what Dream wants, that this is what he burns for, almost as much as George does. He only finds an arched eyebrow in response, and supposes that the expression is answer enough.

George keeps his touches feather-light, reaching for the button at the top of Dream's jeans, warm from his skin. Slim fingers undo it quickly, and he has to resist the urge to take the zipper in his mouth, to tug downwards. He can't come across as *too* desperate.

Still, he doesn't wait before taking the slim piece of metal between his fingertips, dragging it down with an agonizing sound that splits the air between them. Heat warms George's cheeks, but he remains fixated, reaching into Dream's pants to free him from the restrictive confines. He pushes both jeans and boxers to golden knees, sitting back on his haunches as Dream's arousal becomes the forefront of his vision.

Dream's cock is bigger than he expected, flushed a strawberry-red and weeping precum at the tip. It curves upward, a prominent vein throbbing at the underside, and *fuck* if George's breath isn't taken away. The scent of salt and flame already fills his nose and his mouth waters. It's nothing like he imagined and *more*, dark lust rising as he blows a puff of warm breath and watches it twitch in front of his nose.

"Look at you." Dream's voice is quiet but scathing, a low baritone that immediately makes George dizzy. "You're practically gagging for it."

It sends an unwelcome spark of fire through his veins. George can only imagine the picture that he makes, swollen lips parted and eyes dark with longing. Still, the taunt makes him bristle. As if Dream has any right to say that when his own breaths are jagged.

Vindictively, George leans forward, lapping a bead of precum from the tip of Dream's cock and relishing the way it makes his eyes flutter. "You're not worried that I'll bite your dick off?" he challenges, voice tight with strain and arousal.

"No," Dream shrugs, obnoxiously regaining his composure. "Because then I won't fuck you."

George doesn't realize that he wanted it until he shudders, over sensitive skin brushing against the cotton of his shirt. He doesn't dignify Dream with a response, instead baring his teeth and digging his nails into strong thighs until he half-expects to draw blood.

But Dream seems to enjoy it, tipping his head back with a dulcet grin and shifting his hips forward so his cock brushes against George's cheek. It leaves a streak of precum against the pale skin—

George can feel it, wet and slippery and sticky.

He decides that it's long past time since Dream learned his place. Without preamble, he takes Dream into his mouth, knees smarting against the cold floor and head knocking against the wooden door to his back.

The groan that George receives is *obscene*, and he flicks his lashes up to find Dream looking at him, cheeks stained with spots of red and fists clenching. He's unable to savor the expression, because his whole being is focused on the overwhelming feel of the alpha in his mouth.

Lips stretched, George is unable to fit Dream's entirety into his mouth. The flavor of salt spreads across his tongue, precum leaking onto his taste buds until George craves more. It's addicting, the flickering pulse of Dream's heartbeat through thin skin, the way he twitches, expelling small bursts of taste into the wet heat of George's mouth.

He stills for a moment, adjusting to the blistering heat, the smell of fire and destruction and salvation that invades his senses. When he shifts, Dream's dick presses against the roof of his mouth, and the languid vein on its underside is pillowed on his lower lip.

Dream's growl rumbles his chest, and the unrestrained noise is what makes George move. He wants to hear more lascivious sounds, babbling pleas spilling from overripe lips. So he takes Dream's length further into his mouth, breathing through his nose with alabaster hands set against solid thighs.

It hits the back of his throat, and George is aware that he already looks debauched, hair plastered to his forehead and eyes bright with eagerness. There's a line of spit leaking from his lips, warm and wet and filthy. Wrapping a hand around whatever he can't reach, he sinks down further.

Dream's groan is another rumble in his chest, prompting George to pull back and tongue at his slit until he releases a noise that's not quite a whimper. He does it again, restarting his movements until Dream's entire length is slick with spit and precum. It's scarily enjoyable, feeling the tensing of those powerful thighs beneath a hand, the twitching of his arousal in his mouth.

And it causes power to swell in his veins, a smile curling over his lips, stretched pink and pretty around Dream's cock. He knows that Dream can feel it because he thrusts forward a little, hips stilling as he buries himself another inch in George's throat.

George moans despite himself, fingernails digging into the heated silk of Dream's thigh. The muted vibrations are sweet torture to the other alpha, whose eyes close as if experiencing innumerable pain. Every coaxed sound is a point ceded to George, who keeps watering eyes open to catch the rapture flitting across Dream's expression.

He thinks he's doing fine, watching the other lose control and crumble into sea-licked cliffs.

That is, until the alpha starts *talking*.

"Just like that," Dream groans, head tilting back when George does a tricky little thing with his tongue. "My little cocksleeve. You were meant for this, you know?"

George gives a little noise of protest, and Dream smiles, all teeth. The grin is undoubtedly canine, gleaming enamels flashing with a malformed sense of victory that has George reeling.

That quickly, the scales tip. George should've known better than to let his true reaction to the lewd words slip. He doesn't want to admit it to himself, but the deliberate cadence of honey-slicked vowels has him spilling precum in his jeans, cock twitching in a feeble attempt at freedom.

And Dream seems to know it.

“From the moment I saw you at my doorstep,” he continues, mouth twisted pointedly. “The infuriating thing that you are, I imagined your mouth stretched wide around me, taking it because that’s the only thing you’re good for. Filthy slut.”

He thrusts in a little deeper, and George can hardly hear him over the blood rushing in his ears. The words are dirty, licentious promises spilling from parted pink. Spit glossing his lower lip, he can’t quite hold in a mewl.

Dream twitches at the sound, and George shudders at another rush of precum on his tongue.

“So fucking wet and warm,” he groans, hand finally dipping down to entwine with George’s hair. “I can feel you choking around me, your pretty little throat can hardly take it, can hardly take *me*.”

Tan fingers gently tug at dark strands, and another moan slips from George’s lips. He can feel the cool shine of silver rings against his scalp, a blissful smoothness that contrasts with the heated grip of Dream’s palm.

Despite harsh words, the alpha is gentle, waiting for George’s confirmation or movement.

He knows what Dream wants, if the barely-suppressed trembling of strong thighs is any indication. So he pulls off Dream’s cock, spit and precum casting a mirror shine on his lips. Although the filthy admittances may have unraveled his self-control, George can’t let Dream’s smug triumph continue.

“That’s the best you can do?” he says, shrapnel flaying exposed skin. He makes a show of pursing his lips, tapping an irreverent finger against the skin of Dream’s hip. “I could leave right now, find a random omega to fuck instead.”

Dream’s breath stills, warning flashing in his eyes like the crackling abandon of a forest fire.

George’s smile curls at the reaction. “Or an alpha,” he muses, cocking his head in half-serious contemplation. “I’m sure there are many people out there who would want their cock in my throat just as much as you do.”

It was the wrong thing to say.

Dream’s pupils dilate, lip lifting to expose pearlescent canines. His voice is tinged with latent aggression, a delicious possessiveness that almost makes George keen.

“Such a fucking *whore*,” Dream says softly, words deadly. “Is this what you want?”

He waits for a response, but George stubbornly isn’t going to give him one. Dream just smiles, scent roiling around him like some last tether has finally been sundered.

“Yeah?” he asks, fingers reaching forward to clamp the back of George’s neck. Unable to hold in a desperate whine, George shudders, arousal churning low in his stomach. With one hand, Dream brings his cock to George’s lips. He defiantly keeps them closed, a last ditch effort to make the alpha needy and desperate. But it doesn’t work—Dream seems more in control than ever.

He runs the head of his cock against the seam of George’s lips, the slick glide smearing precum as far up as his cheek. Dream is still wet from previous spit, and the trace of coolness is a stark juxtaposition to the silky heat of his tip as it passes over George’s mouth. A pearlescent bead of precum wells at his slit, and George can’t resist. He tongues the swollen slit roughly, relishing the

salty tang of arousal and sweat.

The action seems to be too much, and George feels a momentary flare of satisfaction before Dream speaks. His voice is a dark flame skittering over the ridges of his spine, low and almost as rough as the fingers that clasp at the back of his neck.

“You’re going to take it, even if you think you can’t,” he warns. “I’m going to shape your throat to my cock so you’ll be gagging days later, craving my cum while you take your pretty little dick between your fingers at the memory. You won’t be able to *speak* afterwards,” Dream finishes, fingernails digging into the soft skin of George’s nape.

It’s as if every axon, every pathetic nerve and neuron in George’s entire body flares at the image. He’s unbearably hard, nearing the edge without any stimulation. The thought of coming untouched is humiliating enough that he moans, lips parting to purposefully let the head of Dream’s cock slip through.

“Open up, pretty boy.” The other alpha watches with a single-minded focus as George’s lips stretch around his length, as his throat convulses in a pathetic attempt to catch the pooling spit. “That’s it,” he hisses when George’s nose is pressed to his pelvis, his entire arousal buried between soft lips. “You take me so well.”

George makes some strangled noise, blood rushing through his ears and head in the clouds. All he can focus on is the cock in his mouth. Perhaps he is a slut, just like Dream said.

When Dream begins to move, driving directly into the depths of his throat, George tongues at every inch of skin that he can reach. It isn’t much, slick warmth sliding in and out of his mouth with a lewd squelch. There are tears beading at his lashes and saliva dripping down his chin, and George *loves* it.

Dream isn’t unaffected during all of this, chest heaving and eyes dark as he looks at how well George can take him. When he speaks, his hips find a ceaseless rhythm, working George’s mouth like he’s nothing better than a goddamn toy.

“How do you feel about that?” he croons, a harder thrust forcing George to take in a shaky breath through his nose. “My cock finally shutting you up, taking all the sharp words from that bitter mouth of yours?”

George’s mouth is making the most obscene *glug glug* noises, but he can’t stop. He can’t respond, lost in a whirlwind of pleasure. It’s the messiest blowjob that he’s ever given, and George can feel himself edging over the precipice with it all.

Head occasionally banging against the door, it’s all spit and harsh breaths and gagging and tears. They trickle down George’s cheeks, rivers of salt water that serve as evidence to Dream’s pleasure. Some fall into his mouth, deepening the taste of salt until he feels like he’s going to fly out of his skin.

To ground himself, he lets his teeth scrape over Dream’s cock, a heated caress of pearlescent white. But Dream seems to enjoy the perverse pain, letting out a little sound like he’d just taken a satisfying sip of hot tea. Pale hands scramble for purchase over rough denim, burning arousal rising to the forefront of his mind. The fact that their clothes are still on makes it even hotter, like George indeed is a penny-piece whore desperate for cock.

The thought is what does it for him. He can’t hold it in anymore, trembling fingers reaching down to touch himself. Pulling himself out of his pants, George sighs at the sparking pleasure that curls

in his veins. He only manages to curve a sticky palm around his length before Dream notices and stops entirely.

He slowly pushes into George's throat until the back of his head is pressed to the door, nose to his pelvis. He has nowhere to go and it inspires a perverse thrill that makes his cock twitch.

"Touching yourself, baby?" Dream sighs, disappointed. It only lasts for a second, his words sharpening into something salacious and sweet. "Fucking filthy, desperate slut. Your only purpose is to sit there and listen, like a good little pet. My little puppy."

George glares at that, eyes fringed with tears, mouth full of Dream's cock. The words, the position... they're all belittling, demeaning. But he loves it in the worst way possible, and looks up at Dream through dew-studded lashes to let him know it.

The alpha groans at whatever he finds there, driving in deeper until George is breathless with pleasure. Every thrust rattles his skull, sending shockwaves of heat throughout his entire body. He lifts a fluttering hand to his throat, feeling it bulge with every press of Dream's hips.

The sight makes Dream twitch, heat flashing in his eyes before his body tenses. He's coming before George knows it, twitching in the confines of his throat while salt spreads across a pliant tongue.

Dream finishes in George's mouth, a spurt landing on a pink tongue before he pulls out, teeth bared. Hand gripping the base of his arousal, ropes of his cum stripe George's nose, cheeks, even falls to drape his eyelashes.

The sight of Dream's shudders, his helpless capitulation, is too much for George. With sticky warmth coating his face, he breaks, back arching against the door and fingers scrabbling at Dream's hips as he comes untouched.

It's a moment before they both come down from the pleasure, spots dancing before their eyes and breaths shuddering in rising chests. Dream recovers first, looking down at the mess he made of George's face with a tired grin.

It's clear when he notices that George finished, too. Ropes of cum coat his stomach and softening cock, stripes even landing to spatter across dark jeans. Jade eyes widen with astonishment, before he cajoles George in a breathless voice that makes him twitch.

"Jesus, George," he groans, still looking at the spend coating rose-flushed skin. "My little whore."

George can only make a small noise at that. Dream delivered well on his promise to fuck the words from his mouth—he exists in a state of boneless, quiet bliss.

His lack of response doesn't seem to deter Dream anyways. "*So lucky*," he murmurs to himself under his breath, almost as if he didn't intend George to hear. Hesitant fingers reach forward, swiping some of the cum that lingers high on George's cheekbones.

George closes his eyes at the touch, whining softly as Dream brings his fingers downward, rubbing the cum onto his swollen scent gland. His cock gives a valiant effort to harden, spurred by the filthy action.

Dream doesn't stop there. He drags gentle fingers over George's face, bringing the remnants of his cum into George's open mouth. Pretty lips part, eagerly cleaning golden digits of salt and musk. It causes a new wave of heat to sweep underneath his skin, something building to a crescendo that he can no longer control.

“Return the favor,” George rasps, pushing forward the cum-spattered remnants coating his half-hard cock.

Dream’s breath hitches at the command, but finds the strength to roll his eyes. He obliges anyways, pulling on George’s arms until he’s forced to stand. It’s a lewd reversal of their previous position, especially as Dream sinks to his knees, lapping at the streaks of cum that coat George’s abdomen, the sensitive underside of his length.

Propped against the door, all of George’s limbs are jelly. Boneless, he struggles to stand up, flashes of light chasing his vision along with the static of prolonged pleasure. Dream’s tongue is smooth and hot and wet, yet somehow rough when accounting for George’s overstimulation.

When he finishes, he looks up, hands braced on his thighs. George groans, seeing the remnants of his cum smeared on those plush lips. Something sparks in him at the sight, a possessive claim that boils in his blood and turns like a key in a lock.

The answering flare in Dream’s eyes indicates that he feels the same. A quick glance shows that they’re both hardening, insatiable need building under George’s skin like he’s only felt a couple times a year.

It makes him scoff with incredulity. Of course the desperate blowjob triggered both of their ruts—what else should he have expected from *Dream*?

The other alpha’s eyes are knowing, reflecting the helpless greed that glitters in George’s own. He rises slowly, towering over George in a way that’s still infuriating.

“Is this alright?” Dream rasps, throat adorned with a sandpaper edge as if *he* gave the blowjob, not George.

The answer doesn’t even properly form in his mind before George is already blurting it out. “Yes, you idiot.” When Dream doesn’t make a move, he snarls, control rapidly slipping from his veins. “If it wasn’t alright, you’d be on the floor, castrated already.”

The smile that spreads across Dream’s face is sharp. “My little nightmare,” he murmurs, drawing close enough to share breath. “Can I taste you?”

George whines, closing his eyes and fully surrendering to his rut. When they flicker open, everything is tinted in a faint wash of carmine, as if the lust burning in his capillaries found a way to escape into the air.

“You don’t need to ask,” he pants, grabbing the back of Dream’s neck to pull him in for another scorching kiss.

Dream’s hands are ravenous, guiding him to the bed all the while discarding both of their clothes onto the hardwood floor. They’re going to be crumpled later, a lattice of spiderwebbing folds, but George can’t find it within himself to care.

He can only focus on the heat of Dream’s skin atop his own, the smooth silk of his sheets as he’s pushed back onto the bed. The other alpha settles on top of him, calloused fingertips tracing the spires of George’s ribs.

Plumerias and delicate lilies are branded on pale skin, a harsh mouth and nipping teeth bringing blood to the surface. But George loves the slight pain, loves the way Dream treats him without restraint.

He draws back far enough to observe the tantalizing spread of Dream's bare shoulders, the plumes of ink that span across his neck and down his torso. They curl around a golden hipbone, shadowed granite that makes George's mouth water.

But Dream doesn't take the separation well, growling before reaching down to connect their lips once more. He's as far gone as George is, pupils completely dilated and cock throbbing at his hip. Spit coats their mouths as they break apart, as Dream bends to scatter harsh kisses across a sickle shaped collarbone.

"*Fuck*," he hisses, burying his nose in the curve of George's shoulder. "Smell so good."

George whines at the words, tilting his head to give the other better access. Dream eagerly takes it, leaving bite marks dangerously close to his scent gland and lowering a hand to twist his nipple.

Through a whimper, George asks, breath stuttering. "What do I smell like?"

He's truly curious, in the small part of his mind that isn't addled by lust.

It takes Dream a few minutes to answer him, buried in the task of trailing bruises down George's torso. He takes a nipple in his mouth, circling the other with rough fingertips. The touch is searing, a lightning strike that goes directly to his cock, and George's back arches.

"Please," he grits, not knowing what he's asking for.

Dream doesn't seem to register the plea, intent on suckling the pink nub until George could almost cry from the pleasure. He leaves it reddened and swollen before switching to the other, fingers twisting where his mouth once was. The dual stimulation is nearly too much for George—his hips thrust against Dream's bare abdomen, precum providing a slick, heated glide.

He doesn't know how much time passes, minutes ticking with tedious languor that threatens to sap all the strength from his limbs. And Dream keeps on nipping, soothing the sting of his teeth with his tongue. George's chest was never that sensitive, but the way Dream pinches the swollen rose of his skin is a perverse pleasure.

When he finally pulls back, his lips are flushed and wet. A strand of saliva connects from the puffy, peaked skin, and George's nipples throb in the open air.

When Dream finally speaks, George isn't expecting it. "You smell like brown sugar and thunderclouds," he rasps, pupils a black hole of his own making. "Ozone and winter rain."

It doesn't sound very appealing but it seems that Dream likes it, by the way that he pulls apart George's thighs to kiss along the inner curves. The touch sparks heat, a forest fire of seared nerves and capillaries.

It makes sense that they'd both be cataclysmic, forces of nature capable of wreaking endless destruction. Perhaps they go together in this way, infernos and monsoons colliding in an unrelenting battle for supremacy.

The thought allows the last filter to fall from George's mind—he moans freely as Dream puts a pillow underneath his hips with a mischievous grin. He doesn't register what happens until he feels warm breath over the curve of his ass.

"*Dream*," he pants out, unaware of what he's even going to say.

The sight of the alpha raising his head between George's legs is enough to inspire another rush of

precum.

“Yes, you colossal nightmare?”

George whimpers at the sweetly sarcastic endearment, raising his hips in a wordless prompt to continue.

Dream’s resulting smirk is wicked, and he wastes no time in hooking his hands underneath the crease of George’s thighs. His breath is hot against George’s hole, and he shudders as the first sweep of Dream’s tongue flays him open.

Insurmountable pleasure takes hold of him like a noose, and George thrashes against the restrictive hold of Dream’s hands. The other alpha doesn’t cede an inch, fucking George with his tongue and coaxing a finger past his swollen rim. When he slips in another finger, stretching George open and grazing over his prostate, George sees stars.

Sweat beading on his chest, he arches his back in a desperate bid for additional stimulation.

“Patience, patience,” Dream murmurs onto his skin, but adheres to George’s silent cry. Tan fingers reach up to circle George’s cock, rough touches smearing precum along the hot skin in a stuttering rhythm.

Dream’s hand is callous, uncaring for the way that George whimpers at the touch, fat teardrops of pleasure rolling down his cheeks. It’s arousing in a way that it shouldn’t be, Dream’s utter disregard for George’s overstimulation.

He swipes a finger across George’s slit *just* as he directly presses against his prostate, and it’s too much. Embers flicker in his vision as every nerve in George’s body seizes. He’s teetering on the edge of an unfathomable abyss, nothing but the pure strength of Dream’s hands keeping him aloft.

But Dream has a penchant for cruelty. It shows in the vitriol-laden insults that he occasionally spits, the belladonna-hued glaze in poisonous green eyes. George was a fool to think that Dream would let him have a modicum of release without a cost.

Because the other alpha reads his body like a cardiograph, interpreting every hitch of George’s breath, every shudder of cream-coated ribs with an analyst’s dispassionate gaze. He can sense that George is getting close, hole fluttering around his fingers and abdomen tensing.

So he stops completely, a last few agonizing pumps of his fingers before retreating. George is completely bereft, a dark star winking out of existence as the potential of heat, of pleasure, shudders out of him. He’s strewn atop crumpled sheets, limbs sprawled and chest heaving while trying to regain his composure.

The lingering arousal that simmers in his stomach is midnight agony, and he can’t stop the helpless cry of protest that spills from his lips, hips arching for Dream’s touch.

But the other just chuckles, leaning over George’s languid body like a puppeteer. George is forced to watch the salacious gleam of his gaze as Dream surveys his sweat-dampened collarbone, the shuddering rise and fall of his ribs.

And when Dream speaks, George has to close his eyes because it’s almost too much. He can’t grant Dream the satisfaction of him finishing solely to these filthy words.

“Look at you,” the alpha croons, breath brushing over the curve of George’s cheek. “So fucking desperate, with your pretty cock dripping all over those expensive sheets. My little bitch in heat.”

It's hard to reign in control, but George manages.

"As if," he snorts back, swallowing around a dry throat. "Look at you. So fucking *needy*."

George's body feels like jelly but he manages to prop himself on his elbows long enough to squeeze Dream's cock once. The alpha shudders, shoulders stiffening and jaw clenching. The reaction gives George the confidence to spit out sharp-edged words.

"Maybe *you're* the bitch—you're not going to last when you finally get into my ass."

The taunt makes Dream sneer. "Willing to bet? I can make you cum without even moving."

"And I can make *you* cum without moving."

The gauntlet is thrown down, challenge simmering in the air. To be honest, George isn't truly sure if he can outlast Dream, especially when he's already so close to the edge, but he's willing to try.

"Let's see which one of us can hold out longer," Dream murmurs, pressing his thighs between George's own.

Before he can push in, George moves. "Not like this," he says. Laying on his back is too much vulnerability, giving Dream the advantage without even starting anything in the first place. "Sit back."

Dream objects without complaint, sitting back on his legs with his flushed cock bobbing between his thighs. George gives himself a second to compose himself, drawing several breaths of air to cool his burning cheeks. Once the incessant heat ravaging his body is pushed at bay, he grits his teeth, rising to his knees.

His movements are awkward, leaning over to position himself atop Dream's thighs. He's practically sitting on the other's lap, warm skin blistering against his own. He can feel the brush of Dream's cock against his hole, slicking the sensitive skin with fresh wetness. In this position, he's taller than Dream, treated to a view of mussed hair and swollen lips.

"Take me like this," George murmurs, rocking his hips once for emphasis.

His cock slides against Dream's abdomen, but Dream is the one who moans, eyes briefly closing before fluttering open again.

"Alright," he rasps out. A hand settles on George's lower back, gentle despite the rough words. "You're going to make this hard for me, aren't you?"

But George doesn't get a chance to reply, because Dream's cock catches at his rim and *pushes*, inch by inch. He doesn't even think of trying to hold in the whimper that cracks open his mouth. Dream was impossibly big in his mouth, and feels even bigger inside him.

The world narrows to the two of them, George's fingernails catching at Dream's shoulder blades and leaving lines of crimson. When he thinks that it's over, Dream keeps *going*, working himself into George's body with small, rolling thrusts.

At least Dream seems to be affected by the movement, too—his upper lip is beaded with sweat, chest heaving in an effort to keep himself from fucking George into the mattress.

When he finally bottoms out, George can't breathe. He's full in a way that he's never been before, bursting at the seams with little pinpricks of light. Dream is pressed up right against him, just shy

of his prostate, and the continual waves of heat washing over his body is borderline painful.

He lets out a shuddering breath, dropping his head to Dream's shoulder as he feels himself clench around Dream's length. He knows that it's only a matter of time that one of them breaks, ruts driving them to the brink of madness without additional stimulation. But he's content to stay motionless for now, impaled on Dream's erection while he desperately tries to adjust to the burning stretch.

Dream is silent underneath him but for little shuddering breaths, fingers clenching around George's hips. They're both stubborn to the end, determined to hold their promise and make the other finish without moving an inch.

Already, George can feel that he's alarmingly close. He can tell it by the ebb and flow of his body, walls pulsing around Dream's cock, trying to draw the delicious heat further in. It's just shy of his prostate, and perhaps George bit off more than he could chew, because it's driving him *insane*.

He doesn't know how long they both sit there—fifteen minutes? Twenty? Time oscillates in front of his nose, sweeping hands trickling ivory and onyx down the face of a never moving clock.

All he knows is the desperation of his own body, the heat that stings at his nape and abdomen.

His control is the first to go, head slumping onto Dream's shoulder and glassy eyes fluttering. The golden skin is warm underneath his cheek, and he can even feel himself *drooling*. It should be embarrassing but Dream whimpers at the touch of wetness, arms flexing around George's back as if to restrain himself from moving. George smiles sleepily at the reaction, mind fuzzing as if clouded by laudanum and eyebrights.

His thighs and core are the next to go. They tremble helplessly, and George doesn't think he could control their movement even if he wanted to. A sweet ache burns at his muscles, invigorating and addicting. When he loosens that rigid control of his limbs, an inner part of him relaxes, allowing Dream's cock to sink in another half an inch.

They both cry out, Dream's teeth gritted but George's mouth parted wantonly. He can feel the lewd fluttering of his hole, pushing and pulling ever-closer to orgasm. Dream is still angled just away from his prostate, and George can feel himself clench again as he imagines the sweet deliriousness of an orgasm.

But he can't give up now, not when he has the opportunity to make Dream eat his words. Tightening his hands around that tan neck, George closes his eyes. He thinks that Dream's legs must be cramping underneath him, but his hands are steady behind George's back.

His cock is the last to go. It twitches steadily, trapped against both of their stomachs. It's flushed a dizzying reddish-purple, so hard that it almost hurts. Every slight whisper of movement causes stinging-hot pleasure to race up its length, little spurts of precum dampening both of their skin.

The end happens not long after that. Dream's fingers tighten against his back, little bites of mulberry that George whines at. But he should have known better than to expect the other alpha to play fair.

Dream deliberately shifts, a little twitch of his hips that presses his cock directly against his prostate. After twenty minutes of almost nothing, the stimulation is all-encompassing, a supernova of feeling rising to bubble in his stomach. It forces his body to go over the edge, no matter how hard George tries to reign it in.

He cums, little stuttering cries leaking into the air like popping bubbles. It's nothing like he's ever felt before, helpless gasps accompanying the static shocks of pleasure that race through his veins. Bright lights fill his vision, like twinkling stars plucked from the heavens that have the privilege to be placed within his line of sight. It's soon replaced with smooth darkness, flickers of warmth spiking through his body as he rides out the feeble aftershocks of his orgasm.

When he comes to, he's plastered against Dream's chest, breaths rattling in a wheeze. George doesn't think he's ever finished so hard in his life. Dream grits his teeth beneath him, eyes clenched shut and cock still hard inside him. When George looks down, he realizes that he's still hard, the prostate orgasm leaving his flushed length untouched.

Despite it, he feels blissful and boneless, fucked within an inch of his life. It's soon interrupted when Dream speaks.

"What did I say?" Dream smiles smugly.

"You moved," George hisses in return, anger tensing his body and inadvertently tightening his hole around Dream's cock.

The alpha shudders but tilts his head, pupils dilating. "Did I, now? Bummer. We can try again, though—see how quickly you can come for me without moving an inch of your body. I can even tie you up all pretty while you cockwarm me, my own personal plaything."

George is seething with an unsettling combination of annoyance and lust. Dream doesn't get to dictate the shots, to do whatever he wants. But there's a small part of him that craves it, craves being pinned down and being used as Dream's little toy—being filled with cum over and over, cream spilling from his fucked out hole as the alpha mounts him again and again without restraint. It's filthy, the desire to let Dream do whatever he wants to him, to let him call George a *slut* and a *whore* and a *filthy little bitch*.

He wants Dream to spit on him, take him apart at the seams and put him back together, cum across every inch of his body until he's dripping with it, undoubtedly a lewd little hole to be used.

But as much as George wants it, the desire also makes him furious. Furious at himself for the depths of his longing, furious at Dream for inspiring the need that roars through his veins and comes to a head in his blood.

George aches to strike him.

And Dream sees it, his eyes flaring.

"Do it," the alpha whispers, voice graveled and wrecked as if *he* were the one who just had a mindblowing orgasm.

For once, George obeys.

He slaps Dream clean across the face, relishing the way that his chin snaps back. His palm stings, a ruddy rose that matches the blushing skin of the other's cheek.

Dream stays there for a second, eyes dark as he stares at the wall to his left. His cock twitches inside George. When he slowly tilts his chin back, meeting George's gaze, his eyes are glittering. Finally, he starts a slow, heavy rut, rocking his hips into George's tight heat while keeping his eyes fixated on lustful mocha.

The movement makes George unravel, head tipping back to expose the bruised expanse of his

throat. Every harsh thrust shudders his hips, drives Dream's cock even deeper inside him until George can almost feel him in his throat.

"Again," Dream growls, jade eyes catching his own.

George knows what he wants, and can't help the iron-edged smile that tips across a cheek.

"Beg for it," he croons back, biting back a gasp as Dream fucks into him particularly roughly.

"No," Dream says, shaking his head with that rich, cool confidence that George hates. "Why don't *you* beg for me."

He drives into George a little harder to punctuate the words. George whimpers, nails raking across Dream's shoulders as sparking overstimulation settles across his body like a veil of lace and diamond.

"I'm not your pretty little omega," he manages to gasp out. If Dream wants complete obedience, submission, he'd have to look elsewhere. "I won't listen to you."

But Dream laughs as if that's the last concern on his mind. His thrusts grow desperate, final restraints snapping as he grips at George's hips and pants against his skin.

"Oh god, I know," he groans out, thrusting at a stuttering tempo that makes George keen. "You're like a desert storm, sudden and spectacular, all harsh sand and your stupid, *stupid* mouth."

George whimpers and Dream leans down to breathe in his scent, letting out a desperate groan. "You're like a bad habit," he continues. "Can't quite seem to kick you to the curb."

Tears of pleasure fringe George's lashes as Dream hits his prostate mercilessly. Through hiccuping breaths, he manages to whimper. "Do you *want* to kick me to the curb?"

This time, Dream lets out a proper moan. It's languid and curling, unrestrained and speaking to his loosening control.

"Yes. You're infuriating and stubborn and everything that I've ever wanted."

The admission leaves George reeling, clamping onto Dream as if he doesn't want to let him go.

"Then fuck me like I'm yours," he murmurs into Dream's ear. "Take me however you want."

The words snap Dream's last inhibitions, dissolving them like fragile gossamer or morning dew. His eyes blacken, pupils dilating as the full force of his rut takes over. George can feel himself responding in kind, neck arching as sunspots and shrapnel erupt in his vision.

Strong arms push him onto the mattress so that his back lays against cool cotton, a blissful reprieve from the sweat that runs down his spine.

Dream is merciless, thrusting into George with glassy eyes and breath panting against his collarbone. "I'll fuck you until you can't remember your own name," he hisses, deliciously acrid scent curling around George.

"I'd like to see you try," George gasps out.

He doesn't seem to register it, intent on wringing every last bit of pleasure from George's body like a wet rag. "Fill you up so fucking deep that you won't be able to take anyone else, mold you to *my* cock only."

The possessiveness has George shuddering, something clicking into place as stars float down to fill his vision. He murmurs obscenities and pleas, Dream granting him everything that he's ever wanted.

When the head of his cock presses against George's prostate, he cums. It spreads across his body, a white-hot heat that causes his back to arch and fingers to claw down Dream's back. He can dimly feel Dream hiss, tensing as George tightens and cum spills between their bodies.

Dream still thrusts into him when some of that fog clears, desperately chasing his own orgasm. Delicious sparks of overstimulation bathe his limbs at the sight of sweat-dampened curls, powerful shoulders.

When Dream scrunches his eyes, breath shuddering as he makes to pull out, George grabs his arm. Dream's eyes hold an entire galaxy, winking constellations filling the ink-spill of his blown pupils. It makes George want to swim in the stars of Dream's scent, and it lends him the strength to part swollen lips.

"Inside," he gasps tiredly. "*Inside.*"

The words are it for Dream. George pulls him down to press a filthy kiss to his lips as the alpha shudders, knot pressing against his hole. The burning stretch is overwhelming, Dream's scent mingling with his own in a way that makes his spent cock twitch.

Heat paints his insides in a ivory wash of cream. It goes on for what feel like forever, little twitches as spurts of cum release into his body. It's enough to coax George into a second, dry orgasm.

He's riding out a cloud of endorphins and morphine when he realizes that Dream is pressed against his side, breaths panting and eyes wide.

"Fuck," Dream chokes out.

George is bone-tired, but finds it within himself to crack a wry joke. "You did that already."

Dream rolls his eyes, reaching out to cradle George closer to his chest. "Insufferable brat."

They're silent for a few minutes. The hold of Dream's arms is warm, and George buries his nose in the alpha's neck. They're still connected by Dream's knot, rigid cock still inside him. George shudders as it presses against his prostate when he moves, but lets himself enjoy Dream's scent for now. He smells like sweat and salt and the moment when embers begin to die, a flickering little flame sending delicate spirals of ash into the air.

But then Dream shifts a little, smoothing back George's hair to press a barely-there kiss to his forehead. When he speaks, his voice has an undercurrent of warmth, despite the slightly-sarcastic tone that he takes whenever he speaks to George.

"I really did a number on you," he whistles, eyeing the bite marks on George's thighs, the bruises on his neck.

George just groans, reaching down to tug the covers over both of them and wipe the cum from his stomach. It will be obnoxious to clean later, but he doesn't think he has the strength to move.

"Shut up," he groans. "Take a look at yourself."

Dream does and grins, a purely satisfied smile that makes George's insides churn despite himself.

“Freshly fucked,” he confirms, wiggling his hips a little and making George wince.

“You’re annoying as hell.”

Dream’s hair sprawls strands of gold across George’s pillow. He shrugs at the insult. “Didn’t stop you from getting in bed with me. Maybe that’s part of the appeal.”

George glances at him through his lashes, taking in the shining warmth in Dream’s gaze, the swollen blush of his lips.

“Maybe it is,” he admits with a little smile.

George didn’t realize that he fell asleep until he wakes up to Dream’s face, sunshine making a patch of that golden skin brighter than the rest. He’s uncomfortable and sweaty, dried cum still sticking to him and salt spattered across the crease of his elbow. But he ignores the residual ache in his ass, the groaning joints that speak to a night of well-use, in favor of staring at Dream.

There’s a thin line of drool coming from the alpha’s mouth, dampening the ivory pillow bunched underneath his head. Tawny lashes rest on his cheek and his lips are parted (*mouth breather*) so that George can see the barest gleam of his teeth. And his fists are curled to his chest, as if squaring off in an imaginary boxing ring, a long leg thrown over George’s hip.

He should have expected that Dream would be a cuddler. It’s still surprising, especially when the last memory he has is of the alpha being insufferable as usual. But every last trace of arrogant teases or vitriol-laden comments are buried under the milky-soft layer of sleep.

George lets himself enjoy it—who knows how long it might last.

He watches the rise and fall of Dream’s chest a little more, assuring himself that he isn’t a creep (he’s merely checking to make sure that the alpha is still breathing after their... *enthusiastic* activities last night). Little pieces of hair shift from his exhalations, and George has to stop himself from reaching out and seeing if it’s actually as soft as it looks (especially since George’s own probably looks like a bird’s nest. Scratch that, an *eagle’s* nest).

But the beating of his heart soon grows too large to ignore, and George is forced to confront the reality of what happened yesterday. He’s not delusional enough to say that he didn’t enjoy the sex—because he certainly, *certainly* did.

It’s crude, but Dream’s cock scratched an itch in him that needed satisfying ever since George saw the alpha on his godforsaken doorstep. He’s not too stubborn to say that he’d like a repeat performance. His thighs still twinge with residual pleasure and he feels the most relaxed he’s ever been in weeks. George is practically sinking into his pillow, downy cotton finding its way to alleviate every single ache in his body.

Yes, even though Dream can be borderline insufferable at best and absolutely infuriating at worst, he’d left George completely satisfied in bed. *More* than satisfied, if he remembers last night correctly.

Jesus, it’s embarrassing to think about the way he’d wanted everything—Dream’s hands on him, over him, *in* him. George had never reacted to another person this way before, let alone an alpha, and the depth of his need is almost scary.

He’s certainly cooled down from the afterglow, blissful pleasure and the warring urge to submit

now purged from his body. George doesn't regret last night, wouldn't even mind another go, but what does Dream think of the matter?

Their coupling was a spur of the moment thing, even if some of Dream's words had suggested a longer contemplation.

Brown sugar and thunderstorms and ozone, indeed.

George blushes at the memory.

But there's no indication that it meant anything more than a pheromone-induced croon, pretty words spilling from equally pretty lips. Besides, Dream antagonizes him on a regular basis—that won't change after one round of sex. Amazing sex, but still.

He doesn't even *know* if Dream wants to do this again. George hopes he does, but... How would that even work? They hate each other outside of carnal physicality, would Dream even want to put up with his sharp mouth even if it means a mind blowing fuck afterwards?

Does Dream even like alphas? He has to in some sense, after what happened last night. But he *had* come over smelling of an omega that one day...

George knows that Dream probably has plenty of options to choose from. The thought makes him bristle, but it's the truth. He wouldn't have to settle for George's bitter tongue when he's probably got a list of lovers to dial when he gets tired of his right hand.

The self-deprecating thought makes George huff. One night in bed with the alpha and he's already out of sorts. If anything, Dream doesn't deserve *him*. Grimacing at the thought of what that smart-ass would have to say in response, George shifts.

As a result, Dream's leg slips from atop his hip, shifting down to press directly against George's bladder. George isn't able to appreciate the crisp, golden hairs that scatter up strong thighs or the heat that radiates from Dream's body (the alpha is practically a *furnace*).

Instead, George does his best to extricate himself without jostling the bed and forcing Dream awake. He slowly inches down the covers, inwardly groaning at the loss of delicious warmth. Sluggishly sitting up, he flinches as Dream moves, drawing closer to murmurs a sleepy little noise of protest into his neck.

This time, George can't hold in a small squeak of surprise. Up close, Dream smells like sleep and the slight tang of sugar. He also smells like smoke, but then again, Dream *always* smells like smoke. But this time, his scent is rich, sleepy, like twin trails of vapor wisping from a slumbering dragon's nose. George thinks that Dream would make a good Smaug.

And George can also detect the faint scent of winter rain on him, like when the skies are a pale gray and threaded with fat, puffy clouds *right* on the edge of bursting. Their entwined scents makes him blush again, and George absentmindedly thinks that the continual cycling of blood through his cheeks before breakfast can't possibly be healthy.

But the thought of breakfast makes him think of fresh cinnamon buns, which makes him think of brown sugar which makes him think of...

"You smell like brown sugar and thunderclouds. Ozone and winter rain."

Figures that the most romantic thing ever said to him came from *Dream*.

But George pushes the thought from his mind, ignoring the stuttering shyness that threatens to creep over his shoulders at the lovely words. George doesn't *get* shy. Especially not because of Dream.

So he stops being gentle when he moves, crinkling sheets and rustling fabric heralding the shifting of his body. Dream murmurs behind him, sleepy fingers reaching for the warmth George leaves behind, but he doesn't let himself look back.

The floor of the bathroom is freezing underneath his feet, like chips of ice wedged beneath the thin skin. As an alpha, George's blood runs warmer than most, but he still prefers languid heat to relentless cold. Bladder empty and teeth brushed, he stands in front of the mirror, making a half-hearted attempt to fix wayward locks of hair.

They spiral out of control, long enough to be annoying to deal with but short enough to not be completely unmanageable. George brushes the dark strands from his eyes, resigning himself that this would be the most presentable he could get. Morning needs taken care of, he allows himself a moment to stare at the mirror before returning to bed.

He looks like an absolute *mess*. Thumbprints of violet and peach flutter up his neck, languid tenderness seeping beneath the skin when he lifts a finger to touch. They're stark against his pale skin, deliciously lewd marks of watercolor that leave him almost as well-used as an artist's palette. And there are more along his collarbone, along with what looks like *teeth marks*.

George doesn't remember Dream *nibbling* on him, but the sore skin leaves a jolt of residual fire up his spine. His boxers are riding low on his hips, but George knows what he'll find if he thumbs them down. Constellations of scattered raindrops swirling with hue, little marks where Dream pressed too hard with his hands or dipped his head to suck at the thin skin.

He's well-fucked, and when George lifts his head to finally look into his own eyes, the glint of satisfaction that he finds there is another indicator of overwhelming pleasure.

It's just like Dream to leave him so marked up, so *satisfied* after only one night. The alpha seemed to anticipate his every need, yielding when George wanted him to yield and holding strong when George needed him to. He should've expected their explosive arguments to translate into unbridled heat in bed, but George was surprised regardless.

Despite the sputters of pleasure still lingering in his veins, George is annoyed. He doesn't *like* being surprised. Last night was undoubtedly the best sex he's ever had, and it rankles to know that Dream probably doesn't feel the same.

The thoughts linger as he slips out of the bathroom, flicking the lights off before padding back into the bedroom. Dream's eyes open at the sound of the movement, and the sight of that jade-flecked jasper makes him pause. The alpha's eyes are brighter in the morning, lids slightly puffy with the residual threads of sleep. Sunshine shines through a window behind his back, and it casts luminous shadows onto slightly freckled skin.

George does his best not to look as he slips back into the bed, ivory comforter rustling underneath his fingers as he rearranges it over his chest. He tries to ignore the fact that Dream is naked beside him, smooth torso bare and radiating heat through the thin linen. George only gets a few moments of shut-eye before Dream interrupts.

"Where did you go?" His morning voice is low, a graveled baritone that sends a reluctant shudder up George's spine. "You smell like soap."

It's not hard to forget that Dream is an alpha, but the heightened senses certainly remind George that the man laying beside him runs hot-blooded.

"Use your deductive reasoning," he sighs. It's too early to deal with Dream's bullshit, but George opens his mouth when the other doesn't reply. "Needed to piss and freshen up a bit. We're not all heathens like you, Dream."

Thankfully, Dream just rolls his eyes and grumbles. The sheets crinkle when he shifts to his stomach, and he pillows his cheek on his forearm to better look at George.

"That was an awfully long piss. Besides, I'm hungry."

George grits his teeth. He was a fool to think that one night of fucking would change Dream's snarky attitude.

"I'm not running a bed and breakfast here. Besides, didn't you eat enough popcorn last night for the both of us?"

Dream flops on his back, hair falling on his forehead and arm sprawling on George's pillow. George frowns, resisting the urge to push it away.

"Not really. I think I threw most of it at you. Besides, that was *yesterday*."

"Oh, fuck off. It's only—" George turns to look at the alarm clock on the bedside table. "Eight in the morning. And a Saturday. Can you let me sleep in without being a damned menace?"

Dream's quiet grumble is response enough. The sheets shift yet again as he sinks into a new position, and George grits his teeth to resist clobbering him over the head. The scent of Dream is richer now that he woke up, and it trails over George's skin like a seductive caress.

He's painfully aware of the other alpha's presence beside him, all warm skin and pitch and morning breath. It's hard to pretend that he's asleep, especially when the reminder of last night's events well up between them like a fragile soap bubble. George isn't sure which one of them would broach the topic, but it sure won't be him.

But Dream, aware that he isn't asleep and bold to the end, is the one to break the silence.

"So, what do you think?"

"What do I think about *what*?" George snaps, turning his head to the side to glare at Dream.

The pillow is plush against his right cheek, and Dream is much closer than he'd expected. His eyes are a scintillating pine against the tan of his skin, and his lower lip is chapped yet slightly damp from his tongue. George hates himself for looking, but doesn't move away.

"Y'know," Dream shrugs, boyish in a way that George tells himself isn't endearing, merely annoying. "About last night."

Here it is. It seems that Dream's chosen to talk about their mutual desire to act on their hatred, and George doesn't know if he should feel relieved or apprehensive about it.

"I dunno," is all he can manage, lips sticky and throat parched underneath the weight of his words.

"You don't know about me fucking you into the mattress?" The arch of Dream's brows is incredulous.

George sputters, fingers tightening around the sheet atop his hip. He's painfully aware that Dream is fully naked underneath the soft linen, and his abdomen spasms as he remembers the feel of Dream inside him.

"It was *hardly* that. It—it was more of a *mutual* fucking." George takes a breath, trying to regain his natural composure. "Besides, I don't think I was the one who begged for my mouth on your cock."

Dream just snorts, endless confidence quirking the lips that George isn't supposed to find attractive. "I don't beg."

"Well I don't either."

There's a pause, before pretty lips part, dripping amusement and honey-laden taunt. "We'll see about that," Dream retorts, eyes challenging.

George can't stop a blush at the words, and Dream's gaze when he notices it is purely predatory. His eyes darken and lower, like smoke under polished glass. George hastily turns away, staring at the ceiling and offering Dream an unobstructed view of his neck.

He realizes that it's a mistake when the alpha's breaths deepen, the burn of his eyes trailing the spattering of color across his throat. A warm finger raises tentatively, and George remains utterly still as it grazes over a particularly nasty bruise on the base of his neck. It throbs purple, tender pleasure hissing under George's skin as Dream's finger presses slightly before retreating.

"Was it good for you, at least?" Dream ventures, his voice uncharacteristically quiet.

The tone is tender, overlaid by soft silk, and George can almost fool himself into thinking that Dream *cares*. The pounding of his heart at the thought is inexcusable.

George buries his face in his sheets to hide another blush. "You know it was, asshole," he says, voice muffled.

Indeed, even the memory of the crimson-glossed hours of pleasure makes him burn. But he tries to control himself, knowing that Dream can smell the arousal on him. He must do so successfully, because Dream's next words are devoid of smug calculation.

"If it was good for the both of us, would you want to keep doing it?"

Dream's voice is guileless, once-bitter eyes now wide and earnest. It makes George's stomach fill with luminescent moths, feathered tips tickling the sensitive lining of his insides.

"Doing it?" George asks tentatively, wanting to hear the words from Dream's lips.

There's no explanation for the way his heart lodges in his throat, thrums against his esophagus. He fidgets with the covers to fight the feeling. Hope is a feathered thing, and right now George is choking on it.

"You're being deliberately obtuse." Dream rolls his eyes. "What do you think *this* is?"

"Fucking?" George ventures, brows furrowed. Besides the physicality of the action, what else could it be?

He doesn't understand the flicker of disappointment that runs through a jade gaze, the way that sugar-fine lashes dip to briefly obscure the vibrant color. *Dream* was the one to propose a repeat of

last night; is he already having second thoughts?

George is torn, unwilling to say no, yet apprehensive of Dream's true motives. He doesn't *think* that this is all a ploy to have him on, so what harm is there in blowing off a little steam together? George certainly wouldn't mind another night spent with Dream's cock buried inside him, curling orgasms rolling throughout his body.

"Yes," he says primly, trying to contain his enthusiasm. "It could be... beneficial. An outlet for the both of us."

He doesn't know if Dream will read into the response, expose paper-thin words for the carmine-hued lust that twines underneath. His clavicle is cold, and George brings the comforter up to his chin with a small sigh.

"Yeah," Dream snorts, rolling his eyes. "If you consider my cock in your ass an outlet."

George hisses away the heat in his cheeks, fingers twitching over the coverlet. "Must you always be so crude?"

"It's who I am, sweetheart. Deal with it. Besides, you seemed to enjoy it plenty last night," he leers in return, warm breaths brushing over George's cheek.

"I enjoyed it when I slapped you," George says, hoping to embarrass Dream at the reminder.

"I could tell," he snorts. "By how hard you rode my cock after."

This time it's George's turn to flush.

It's maddening, Dream's ability to evoke a reaction from him like no other. He doesn't trust himself to speak, so he stays quiet for a moment before responding, one leg accidentally brushing against the heated silk of Dream's bare thigh.

"Go shower, you stink of me. At this rate we won't have to say anything—Quackity and Sapnap will smell it on us."

Dream raises an unfairly perfect brow, pillowing his cheek on an arm. "I'm assuming we don't want them to know about us?"

George shivers a little at that. *Us*.

"It serves them right for being so meddling. Truce, my ass," he scoffs, remembering Quackity's phone call.

"Fine with me," Dream shrugs, covers slipping from his shoulders as he clambers out the bed. The mattress dips from his efforts, spilling George's reluctant arm over the heat he left behind.

He's left staring at Dream's back, burnt gold cross-hatched with angry-looking scratches of ruby. The tips of tawny hair curl at Dream's nape, and ivory sheets pool below the dimples low on his spine. But George is still fixated on the marks from desperate nails, when the stars seemed to erupt and the moon flew lower in its orbit.

George doesn't regret them, can't explain the simmering heat of latent possessiveness in his gut. Pliant lips part, a gentle exhale falling from an unrepentant mouth. "*Shit*. I did a number on you, huh?"

At the foot of the bed, Dream turns around, features quirked in question. George has to keep his eyes on Dream's own. He clarifies: "Your back, I mean."

Understanding manifests in the alpha's uncaring shrug, muscle shifting under taut skin as Dream shifts into a languid stretch. It's indecent, the slow movement of his arms, and George bites his lip.

"It's not a big deal," Dream finally says, glancing at George through his lashes. "They don't even hurt anyways."

His irreverence frustrates George a little. "Yeah," he protests, sitting up on the bed and letting the comforter pool at his lap. "But it might not be good for you—I think I read something about nails and bacteria or whatever."

George has no idea what in the world possessed him to talk about germs and the possibility of Dream's scratches getting infected, which are undoubtedly the least sexy topics in the world. He winces a little, eyes squinting and lip curling up.

But Dream doesn't look concerned. His eyes remain a pristine jade unclouded by worry, and his lashes flutter. "They're shallow, don't worry. I don't think anything *you* can do will hurt me." He offers a cheeky grin at George's anger. "Relax. The shower will disinfect anything, you can let your pretty little head rest."

George's cheeks flush at the belittlement, and he lets an unadulterated scowl come to his lips. He doesn't know why Dream's sarcasm and irreverence are comforting, but the familiar banter—even after they've had sex—eases the tension in his shoulders somewhat.

"Alright, but don't come crying to me if they hurt," he manages.

George is half-tempted to join him but doesn't, unsure of where they stand even when they established that they'll still be fucking.

"I won't," Dream tosses over his shoulder as he ventures to the bathroom.

George does his best to glare at the alpha's retreating back instead of doing something stupid—say, staring at his ass for a good fifteen seconds. When the water finally starts and steam undoubtedly fogs up the mirror inside, George lets himself flop onto the bed with a sigh.

He doesn't know what he's doing with Dream—even if they've both tentatively agreed to continue whatever happened last night. It didn't sound like a bad idea initially, but Dream has a way of getting under his skin in a way that drives him mad. George wonders how long he can last before he snaps. At least he knows that it will result in a few pretty orgasms, he snorts.

The sound of the shower skitters over the thin walls, a gentle lullaby that weightens his eyelids with sand. Sound and light both fragment as he lowers his eyes, letting soft lashes rest at his cheeks. He falls asleep to the sound of Dream humming in the shower.

He doesn't know how long he slumbers in gentle repose, limbs spread across the bed like a starfish and mouth slightly parted. It's a dreamless rest, periwinkle shadows shifting into azure sunspots behind his eyes. The coolness of the sheets are comforting against overheated limbs, but he finds himself chasing the warmth that another person left behind. But the relaxation doesn't last long.

George is woken up by a damp hand on his shoulder.

He's startled awake, colors wheeling in his vision like a tropical spyglass constructed of amber and verdigris. For a moment, George doesn't know where he is, perception darkened at the edges and

narrowed like the pinprick of a needle. All he registers is heat on his shoulder and in front of him, roiling through the air until it makes his skin itch with a semblance of greed and desire.

He must make some kind of sound because the hand jostles him a bit more urgently, gentle fingers pressing into his back and collarbone.

“George?”

It registers dimly, murky voice filtering through his consciousness like underwater light. He takes a deep breath, lashes flirting with his cheekbones to let in a wash of bright light.

Dream stands before him, ivory towel wrapped around his waist and arm outstretched. His hair plasters against his temples like toffee, and the freckles at the base of his neck look like grated chocolate. George realizes that he’s staring when he tracks the path of a water droplet down his collarbone and into soft terrycloth.

“What happened?” he mumbles out through a mouthful of syrup, forcing himself to meet Dream’s eyes.

The alpha grins a little and George hates himself for noticing how pink his cheeks are from the steam.

“Sorry for disturbing your beauty rest,” he begins. “God knows you need it.”

George just groans, knowing that Dream’s banter won’t end no matter how tired George is. He pushes himself up to sit, ignoring the way Dream’s eyes dip to his clavicle.

“Shut up and tell me what you want,” he mutters around a sleep-dry tongue. He winces at the scratchiness of his throat, and fumbles out of bed to head to the kitchen. Even a glass of tap water would be sorely appreciated.

“Can I borrow some clothes?” When George looks back, Dream’s gaze is expectant. “I don’t want to wear my dirty ones from yesterday when I’m all fresh and clean.”

The mention of clothes makes George shiver, aware that he’s only in a pair of tight boxers. He pauses to scoop a pair of discarded sweatpants by the foot of the bed before replying.

“Sure,” he agrees, shoving one leg through the soft fabric. “You can pick anything in that set of drawers over there.”

He gestures to the far side of the room with his chin. Thankfully, Dream ambles towards that direction without protest. George doesn’t let himself watch Dream get dressed, choosing to keep a modicum of his dignity and get some food into his stomach.

He leaves the bedroom behind, venturing into the light-spangled kitchen with soft footfalls. For the most part, everything is as it usually is. The only indicators of last night are empty popcorn packets sitting in the trash, and an uncapped jar of spinach-cheese dip on the table.

After closing the bottle and putting it in the fridge, George pours himself a glass of water. The gentle trickle of liquid still rings in his ears as sweet coolness runs down his tongue. Thirst quenched, George brings to make breakfast.

At eleven o’clock on a Saturday morning, the only acceptable food to George is a stack of pancakes, slathered with strawberry jam and Nutella. He’s made it so many times in college that it’s a mindless activity—heading to a skillet and whisking together a couple eggs, sugar, and flour.

It takes a few minutes but they're done, thin and smooth and slightly crispy at the edges just how he likes. When filled with fruit and sweetness, they're absolutely divine.

Without letting himself think about it too much, George sets out two plates on the kitchen table, serving each with a healthy serving of pancake. Arranging himself atop one chair, he only has time to take one bite before Dream comes in, undoubtedly lured by the scent of sugar and sweetness.

George sees the color of his shirt first, a gorgeous pink that brings out the roses of his cheeks and smoothness of his skin.

Dream managed to find the singular favorite shirt that George owns, donning it with an irreverence that leaves him speechless. The baby pink cotton settles across his shoulders, curving at his collarbone and falling at his waist. On George, the fabric is oversized, ending at mid-thigh and perfect for late night movies or study sessions.

Dream's certainly seen him wear it several times, teasing him about the color and the way that it puddles at his lap. To see the same shirt on Dream comes as a shock, especially when it was on top of an adjacent chair and still covered in George's scent.

He barely manages to hold in a squeak before Dream reaches the kitchen table, sweatpants brushing the dark wood.

Looking at the plate before him curiously, he asks, "Is this for me?" Without eating for a response, he continues. "What is it?"

George should be amused by his presumptuousness, but remains mildly amused. "Do you really think that I'd eat the two different plates?"

Dream stares at him with lowered brows, as if unsure that it's a trick question. "I've seen you gobble a footlong sandwich and steal half of Sapnap's when he wasn't looking," Dream says dryly. "I really wouldn't put it past you."

Not the answer he was expecting, George diverts little energy in keeping up a scowl, and instead changes gears to address Dream's previous question.

"They're pancakes," he says, bringing a forkful of the strawberry-laden goodness to his mouth for emphasis.

Dream takes the bite as a cue to sit down, but looks at the food as if it were alien. Lifting up his fork and prodding at his plate, Dream frowns.

"They don't look like pancakes. Are you sure they aren't crepes instead?"

"I'm sure," George groans, shoving another forkful into his mouth. If he knew that Dream was this much trouble, he never would've made them in the first place.

Dream's hum is unconvincing, but he seems to pick up George's growing annoyance. Without another word of protest, he picks up his fork and messily cuts a bite into the jam-filled pancake. The rolled-up dough gushes red onto his plate, but Dream manages a messy forkful regardless.

It seems that he likes it, because his eyes brighten and he begins shoveling the food into his mouth at a vaguely alarming pace. He's done with his plate and staring longingly at George's when George grudgingly gives him half of his own remainders.

Dream eats those happily, putting his plate and fork in the sink and patiently waiting for George to

finish.

“Well?” he asks.

George chews his last bite carefully, methodically, before putting his dishes in the sink and responding.

“Well?”

The bland response is meant to annoy Dream and it works, if the alpha’s darkening eyes and the slight hitch in his scent are anything to go by.

“Well, what are we doing now?” Dream tries again.

George is taken aback, and tries not to let it show. He’s never had a friend-with-benefits before, but is this what they do? Steal clothes and commandeer a free breakfast and ask to stay?

It throws George off kilter, words slightly larger than his throat can handle and fists clenching on empty air.

“Uh—” he begins, trying to piece together the maelstrom of his thoughts into something that wouldn’t embarrass himself in front of the other alpha.

“Yeah?” Dream cocks his head in a way that’s distinctly lupine.

It brings a flush to George’s cheeks and makes it even harder for him to think. *This* is why he doesn’t like spending prolonged periods of time with Dream. The other alpha has the tendency to soak up all the magnetism in a room, like the pull of a blackhole that liquifies George’s mind into soupy squiggles.

“I don’t know about you, but I’m pretty busy today,” he starts awkwardly.

Dream seems to take the hint, expression shifting as if someone closed a door in his face. “What, no more morning cuddles?” he asks, the slightest trace of a sneer in his voice.

The vinegar surprises George, and he’s unable to suppress the instinctive vitriol. “Don’t be *stupid*.”

But his words hang in the air, trailing off into a golden moue of uncertainty instead of the sharp-edged retort that he’d initially wanted. Dream seems to sense it too, allowing a sunflower-adorned grin to peek from parted lips.

“Don’t seem so sure about that, Georgie,” he cajoles, standing up from his chair.

Still seated, George can only gape at him, cheeks reddening and fingers clutching at the grain of the table beneath him. When he doesn’t reply, Dream shrugs.

“I’m also pretty busy today,” Dream adds, blowing a strand of tawny hair from his eyes.

George isn’t sure if he’s telling the truth, and stares at the alpha through narrowed eyes. “Sure...”

“So,” Dream drawls, stepping away from the table. George takes the movement as a cue for him to rise from his seat. “I’m assuming that you’re not going to show me out or give me a goodbye kiss?”

From the way that his eyes twinkle and his tongue prods at the inside of his cheek, Dream is obviously joking. George just rolls his eyes, leaving his plate atop the table in order to usher Dream

towards the door.

“Remove your sorry ass from my apartment,” he deadpans, but some of that humor must peek through because Dream smiles.

“So no kiss?”

“No,” George half scoffs, half laughs. He swallows, prodding Dream through the kitchen and towards the door. Playing into Dream’s amusement is a dangerous game, but George lets himself fall just this once. “You’ll have to work harder to achieve that.”

Dream’s eyes light up. George thinks that they look like solar flares and firestorms. “I’ll take you up on that challenge,” he murmurs, head twisting to look back at George as he unbolts the front door.

Hands suddenly empty, George wraps his arms around himself. “I bet you will,” he whispers.

George stands inside the apartment, watching as the light swallows Dream up whole.

Contrary to Dream’s promises, George doesn’t see the alpha for several days.

Busy schedules and slight uncertainty have kept them apart. George isn’t sure how to proceed with the other alpha, how to initiate another clash of teeth and skin and lust. He’s not delusional to pretend that he doesn’t want it—Dream’s mouth on his and hands between his thighs. But he doesn’t know how to communicate the desire without coming across desperate or foolish.

He’s debated a late-night text message a dozen times, slim fingers tapping at his screen while he remains hard within his boxers. In the end, George always lets his phone slip from his fingers, head tipping back with a frustrated sigh as his palm curves over himself. The orgasm is unsatisfactory, as if George’s body has become addicted to the calloused touch of Dream’s fingers instead of his own.

What’s the most frustrating of all is George’s eagerness if Dream were to propose another hate-filled fuck against sticky sheets. He can hardly see himself saying no, but... This is supposed to be a two-way street. George should also feel comfortable to ask for what he needs, especially when Dream’s brash cockiness lends his words an air of easiness that George’s doesn’t possess.

Thinking about all this is irrelevant anyways, especially when the two of them are currently locked in a stalemate that neither wants to broach. Glossy ivory pitted against ebony, George decides that he’ll wait for Dream to make the first move.

That’s hard to do when he hasn’t seen the other alpha in several days. The only traces of Dream are the offhanded comments that Sapnap makes and the way that George’s phone lights up at midnight with a random photo or joke that Dream thought he would like.

Today was supposed to bring another opportunity, but George sits across from Sapnap and Quackity, disappointment filling the fingers that tap restlessly against the table.

“Stop your fidgeting,” Quackity huffs, beanie slouching over his hair as he raises his head to glance at George. Stacks of paper lie messy beneath his hands, spooling pages and scrawling ink. A folder regurgitates dozens of printed documents in anger of being stuffed full, and Quackity winces as the corner of a page becomes creased as he reaches for a pen.

“Don’t you think it’s time for a break?” George tentatively proposes.

“I second that,” Sapnap agrees eagerly.

The only thing in front of the beta is a strawberry-oat granola bar and a half-finished chapter of *Attack On Titan*. Sapnap’s finals finished last week, and he’d celebrated by promptly stuffing all of his chemistry notes in the trash. Benzene rings and polypeptides can be damned, he said, sweeping his desk clear of sticky notes while George watched.

George isn’t as lucky. Although his thesis is almost done, he’s spearheading a new project for his work, and the amount of technical details needed to be managed is overwhelming. His laptop sits before him, gleaming silver and unhappy with the absurd number of tabs that George has open.

Sapnap and George would both prefer to be elsewhere, one pulling another Valorant all-nighter and the other taking a midday nap. But Quackity had wanted company to study for his final, had messaged their group chat with an effusive plea filled with emojis and exclamation marks.

Although Dream’s response was conspicuously absent, George and Sapnap had both reluctantly agreed to supervise Quackity’s self-imposed torture. The university library wasn’t far away, they’d even walked together to reach the building of dark wood and silver and glass.

Picking a table was an ordeal and a half, but they managed to get situated somewhere off to the far right of the circulation desk. Plenty of light, plenty of space, and plenty of access to the reams of free printer paper guarded by a bored-eyed librarian.

But after two straight hours, no amount of light or space or paper could save George. Quackity didn’t seem to agree.

“We haven’t even been here that long. You’re already asking for a break?” The beta taps his uncapped pen against his paper a few times before looking up in annoyance. Streaks of bottle-blue ink are left behind.

Sapnap just nods, jaw clenched stubbornly. “I’m hungry,” he whines. “All I had today was this damn granola bar and room temperature water. Please don’t let me succumb.”

George snorts at the dramatics, but Quackity isn’t as amused.

“And who asked you to come here without eating breakfast? Or lunch?”

Sapnap withers in his seat, but has the better sense to refrain from blaming Quackity. With inked-up paper around him and a study-high glint in his eye, the beta looks scary.

George decided to take pity on Sapnap. “He’s right, you know.” When Sapnap opens his mouth to protest, George rolls his eyes. “But that doesn’t mean that I can’t grab you something to eat. What is that ridiculous stomach of yours craving now?”

Sapnap perks up like a puppy, hazel eyes brightening and hands plastering flat against the table. George can almost imagine a tail wagging behind him.

But before he can answer, Quackity cuts in. “There’s no need.”

There’s an ink stain by the beta’s mouth from where he chewed on his pen cap, and his fingers are furiously tapping at his phone. George wonders if he has a death wish, getting between Sapnap and food. Sapnap is indeed glaring at him with murder in his eyes.

Quackity seems to realize it, quickly clarifying with an irreverent roll of his wrist while he types with his other hand. “Dream’s coming. I’ll tell him to grab us something.”

George tenses up at the sound of the alpha’s name. The others don’t seem to sense it, Sapnap agreeing with a satisfied hum and Quackity turning back to his work. They don’t notice George’s whitened knuckles, the way his breath is frozen lightning in his chest.

Suddenly, the prospect of seeing Dream is a little too much. Having to face him while flickers of licentious memory skitter across his mind? Impossible.

But he can’t back down now, not when Dream is already aware that he’s with the others. It will look like a defeat, a pointed avoidance of what they’ve already agreed upon. George will never let Dream win.

And so he stays, fingers tapping against the table in a disjointed rhythm. Even the library’s atmosphere isn’t enough to calm him. It usually is, whenever he stops by to join Quackity and take a break from loitering alone at their flat. It’s an overcast day, so large windows let in grayish light to make the clustered bookshelves somehow cozier.

The winding stacks are a dark labyrinth of dust and paper and ink; George has been known to get lost in them while on the hunt for an interesting book. But they hold no interest now, stories left untouched and worlds undiscovered. Every firing neuron is focused on keeping a straight face, eyes resolutely glued to his computer screen as if George could block all else.

He’s successful for a little bit, clearing miscellaneous emails and idly organizing his desktop. But then he feels Dream.

It’s subconscious, the sixth sense that sends tingles down his spine and jams his fingers atop the keyboard. Dream’s presence is almost involuntary, like the way you don’t notice the sun slipping behind a cloud until you feel the absence of its heat on your skin.

George feels that absence at first, cold awareness as the faintest dregs of Dream’s scent reaches his nose. Fire and embers should be prohibited amidst a haven of novels and leather-backed grimoires, but there’s a slow seductiveness in the gradual collision. It sends sparks skittering to his spine, flame blooming at his fingertips.

His back is to the door so he can’t see Dream approach, but every step brings the warmth of a supernova. Poised to split him apart into minuscule atoms. Crisp his edges like ivory parchment at a hearth. Singe his fingertips like a moth over a candle.

The back of his neck is surely warm with a premature blush, which is exceedingly embarrassing since Dream isn’t even in his line of sight yet. But he stubbornly tilts his head down to the computer, refusing to look until Dream plops a paper bag squarely in the center of the table.

“What is that?” Sapnap crows, eyes locked onto the brown paper and crinkled parchment peeking over its edges. The scent of cinnamon and sugar wafts through the air, and even Quackity lifts his eyes from his laptop.

“The snacks that you requested,” Dream snorts. “And some coffee, too. Since I’m not an absolute heathen.”

“Can I marry you?” Quackity says, gaze longing as he glances at the four styrofoam cups cradled in Dream’s hands. He’s practically bouncing in his seat, a maniacal gleam in his eyes as he awaits the rush of caffeine.

Dream just snorts, carefully placing the coffee in front of everyone. George pretends to ignore the heat radiating off his arm as he receives his own cup.

“You’re not my type, Quackity,” Dream chides, sliding into the seat opposite George. His sprawl is loose, joints infused with silver and the kind of irreverence that Dream can only have.

Sapnap tears the bag of cookies open, and Quackity reaches across the table to grab one before he responds. “That’s hard to believe.” The words come out garbled around crumbs and sugar granules. When Dream just rolls his eyes, Quackity jeers. “What’s your type, then? A blond-headed idiot like yourself?”

George hides his smile into his coffee. The steam tickles his cheeks, making his hair cling to his temples. When he glances up, Dream is looking straight at him, a lazy smirk plastered across those abhorrent lips of his.

“I dunno,” he drawls, eyes catching with George’s until a frisson of tension winds through the air. When jade irises slide over to Quackity, George feels like he can breathe again. “Someone smart enough to keep up with me, obviously.”

George can’t hold in his snort. “*Obviously*,” he mutters under his breath, faint amusement tinging the words.

Although Dream doesn’t look at him, George can feel the alpha’s attention turn his way. The piercing gleams silver in the light through the library windows, and George stares at the way it tugs at his lower lip.

“Someone good in bed, too. Who wouldn’t mind getting on their knees once in a while.”

Supernovas explode on George’s skin as he flushes. Quackity’s groan and Sapnap’s mutter of disgust is barely heard over the blood rushing through his ears. He supposes that he should be mad, disgusted at the fact that Dream would dare taunt him in front of their friends. That Dream would look at him like *that*—like he’s underwater and George is the air that he needs to breathe.

But he isn’t. He’s annoyed sure, but the rising sense of indignation is eclipsed by the heat in his lower stomach. It’s like their little secret, paraded under their best friend’s noses. Quackity and Sapnap are easy to ignore, amused taunts falling to the background. Dream is looking directly at him, the flats of his eyes darkened by dim lighting and something that George doesn’t want to delve into.

It makes his mouth dry, sour lemon and sandpaper abrasions coating his throat. George’s gaze is captivated by the tawny line of lashes that ring Dream’s eyes, lovely shadows dipped in ink and dulcet pleasure. It’s just them two, the world falling under the gauze of cotton and gossamer.

“You’re so crass,” he murmurs. It doesn’t come out as vehemently as he intended. The midnight caress reaches Dream’s ears, causing the alpha to flash a show-growing smile.

He props his elbows on the table, the line of his bicep immediately attracting George’s attention. “And you like it.”

There’s a brief pause as George takes him in, several days of separation disappearing under the weight of his eyes. Dream’s wearing a polo shirt, white collar contrasting against golden skin and growing shadow. George has seen him in sweatpants and sleepwear, pajamas and band tees. The switch to slightly more formal wear is strangely alluring.

It shouldn’t work, but it does—the cleanly-pressed clothes contrasting with the wild fall of his hair,

the amused tilt to his lips. It makes George want to ruin him, dig his fingers deep into skin and flesh and bone. To uncover the core of what makes Dream tick, burrow to his heart and unravel every strip of longing that he finds there.

He'll spool it back together, compose Dream from the skilled movements of lithe fingers and the cloth of George's desire. Bursting with golden thread, George would exacerbate Dream's ragged edges, highlight every flaw. He'd be a patchwork quilt of multicolor fabric, silks fading to cotton and to the ugly truths that lie beneath the surface. George wants to see all of them.

He hopes it doesn't show in his eyes, the unfettered hatred and longing that curls through his blood. A dichotomy of veiled opposites, it sends heady dizziness to coat his skin.

Quackity is the one to break the silence, an amused laugh splitting the air. "I guess I'm *not* your type then."

"What did you think?" Sapnap says, munching on a cookie. "Dream wants someone *smart*."

The conversation devolves into mumbled expletives. George takes the opportunity to drink another sip of coffee, letting warmth fill his mouth as he tries to focus on the laptop in front of him. But the pixels swim before his eyes, and no matter how hard he tries, it's impossible to maintain focus.

He's hyper-aware of Dream's presence across from him. Cinnamon sugar and cream can't mask the warmth of his scent, and the alpha's legs are stretched underneath the table. George is careful to draw his own towards himself, avoiding even the slightest brush of fabric. When Dream slouches in his chair, spreading his legs even farther, George gives up.

Laptop screen forgotten, he pastes an indifferent drawl across his features. "So, Dream. What have you been up to?"

The alpha's head perks up at the acknowledgment. His mouth curves into a sly smile, as if he can see the reason George is asking. As if he can see right through him.

"This and that," he shrugs, ever casual.

"Are you deliberately trying to be an idiot? Or is this just an elaborate attempt to raise my blood pressure?" Although George is familiar with Dream's taunting, he can't stop a frown from spilling across his features.

He doesn't know what he wants Dream to say. George isn't entitled to an explanation for the alpha's absence—they've gone longer periods without talking to each other anyways. It's not like they're *friends*. George just enjoys the opportunity to get under Dream's skin once in a while. It doesn't make them anything other than grudging acquaintances. Or acquaintances who have sex occasionally.

Even though they've only had sex once.

Not that George is desperate to rectify the matter. He just thinks that Dream may have been onto something. Clawing his frustrations onto tan skin is an adequate outlet for stress, after all. Even if he has to deal with the little problem of Dream's stupid mouth.

"Do you know what Nash Equilibrium is?" Dream props his chin on an upraised hand, lazy strands of hair falling over his forehead.

Case in point. George can never expect what will come out from Dream's mouth. His economics knowledge is fuzzy, limited to a couple college classes in which he'd sat in the back of the room

and struggled to stay awake. How is he supposed to use market elasticities in real life anyway?

“Vaguely,” he replies. “I remember studying the concept for an exam once, but...”

Dream grins at the admission, a sharp-toothed little smile. “So you aren’t as all-knowing as you claim?”

Even after their night together, it still seems that Dream has a penchant for getting under his skin. He’s at least grateful that the others are ignoring them, conversation dissipating around deaf ears. Quackity is listening to a lecture on his laptop, brows furrowed and pen cap halfway in his mouth. Sapnap isn’t much better with his tattered earbuds—the beta uses his phone to watch an animated episode of something incredibly gory.

They don’t witness George’s temper flare, a leash slipping through lithe fingers. “I don’t claim shit.” He spreads his hands against the harsh grain of the table, eyes never wavering from the ring of Dream’s lower lashes. “And I hardly think that I’m stupid for not remembering what *Nash Equilibrium* is.”

Dream raises his hands in the air, a gesture of defeat accompanied by a disbelieving laugh. “I didn’t say *that*.” George’s raised brow prompts him to clear his throat. “Anyways, it’s not that important. You don’t remember what the prisoner’s dilemma is, by any chance?”

“Isn’t that the riddle with the confession or cooperation scenario?” George asks.

Despite his misgivings, George can’t help the intrigue that colors his cheeks. He almost feels like he’s back in a classroom, torso tilted eagerly and hands clasped in front of him. It’s absurd to think that *Dream* can elicit such a reaction.

“Basically,” he confirms. The alpha gives him a soft smile that does more to George’s heart than he wants to admit. “Imagine that we’re both criminals held in solitary confinement.”

George snorts. He can’t help being difficult. “It’s easy to imagine *you* behind bars for life, but what the hell would I do to get arrested?”

“Manslaughter? Homicide?” Dream purses his lips, a prim little thing of crushed roses. “I could definitely see you hitting someone over the head with a weed whacker.”

George sputters, protestations spilling from his lips as he glares at the alpha. “A *weed whacker*?”

“What, would you want a scythe or something instead? I don’t know your preferred weapon from my limited knowledge of gardening tools.”

“If I were to murder someone, I wouldn’t stoop so low to use a weed whacker,” George mumbles, petulance lacing his voice with lemon juice and vinegar.

Dream picks up his cup and snorts into his coffee. “Would a garrotte be more your style? A little more dignified?”

More than a fucking garden tool, George resists the urge to say. The last sip of his coffee is bitter, and he squints as Sapnap reaches for the single remaining cookie. “Fuck off and tell me about your stupid Nash Equilibrium.”

“Prisoner’s dilemma,” Dream corrects helpfully. He pouts when George glares at him, but thankfully continues without further protestation. “So, we’re both prisoners. The prosecutors are morons, and can only convict us if we snitch on each other.”

George can't hold in a dry comment. "Typical law enforcement."

To his surprise, Dream grins wryly instead of shushing him. "Don't let Quackity hear you say that. He'll go off the rails explaining the 'implicit and explicit biases in the criminal justice system.'" His weary glance says he's been subjected to the hours-long lecture several times.

George laughs, well-acquainted with Quackity's passion himself. "Alright, so the authorities are incompetent. Now what?"

Dream smiles at George's attempt at encouragement, and it's like the sun peeking through the clouds. "We can either snitch or remain silent. If we both remain silent, we'll get only one year of jail time."

"Seems like a good deal for a homicidal weed whacker-er," George quips.

Dream's tongue peeks between his teeth as he tries to hold in a laugh. George can't explain the blush of pleasure that runs through him at the sight.

"Anyways," Dream continues. "If we both snitch, we'll both get five years of prison time. And if you stay silent and I confess that you killed someone with a weed whacker, then I'll be set free and you'll stay ten years in jail."

"Jesus," George snorts, warming his hands with his empty coffee cup. "I suppose that I'll just have to snitch before you do."

A crease furrows Dream's brow, like two hands pressed into fresh-tilled soil. "That's just the thing," he says slowly. "The Nash Equilibrium is that we each betray each other."

"Even if it turns out that we have to spend five years behind bars?"

"Yeah," Dream says. His lips are pressed together, white petals flushed with frissons of pink. "Because we'll always act in our own best interest. If you decide to betray me, the best case scenario will be zero years in prison, and the worst case scenario will be five years."

"But if I remain silent, the best case is one year in prison and the worst case would be ten years," George finishes slowly. His fingernail scratches at the table as he ponders what Dream proposed. The words come slowly when George parts his lips again, a furrow between his brow that matches Dream's own. "But wouldn't the best scenario occur if we both cooperate and remain silent? To minimize total jail time, I mean?"

"Exactly," Dream murmurs, his lashes casting momentary shadows on his cheekbones. It's as if dark feathers crest the soft skin, but when George blinks, they're gone. "But we'll never cooperate. We'll always act in our own self-interest, scared of the consequences if we were to hope for something more."

George narrows his eyes. Dream doesn't sound as if he's simply teaching obscure economics concepts and relishing the questions that tumble from George's parted lips. His words are slow, pointed. Dripped in molasses and steeped in cinnamon tea to match the crumbs that are scattered across the table.

It's easy to tell that this little scenario isn't all surface-level. Underneath the veneer of paste-gems and flash-fire lies a little kernel of intensity, a purposeful darkness that lilts Dream's voice and cautions his words.

"Is this supposed to be some kind of metaphor?" George asks slowly.

He doesn't know what he'd feel if it was. But Dream's syllables are steeple-sharp, and George can almost feel the pad of his finger slice underneath the weight of what's not being said. He should dread Dream's answer, suspect the worst from the mention of trust and betrayal and hope. Instead, George's heart is in his throat, a hummingbird trapped beneath the fine bones of his clavicle as he waits for Dream to explain.

The alpha's scent sharpens for a second, like the crackling pop that spits from a campfire. It soon settles into something darker, more placid. Like pitch and midnight-shrouded caution after the flickering embers smolder into soot and ash.

"Not particularly," Dream drawls, features settled into an irritating smile that makes George's heart drop to his stomach.

He can't explain the disappointment that drips molasses through his veins, forget-me-nots wreathing at his fingertips. "So, what? You were at work the past couple days and wanted to impress me with useless econ knowledge?" George sneers.

"I didn't say that," Dream says slowly, the same careful smile pasted onto his features. "Just wanted to share a fact with you."

Is that what all this was? George stares at him incredulously. "It's a fact that I want to murder you," he finally says, voice flat. "All the mystery shows that I've been watching will finally come in handy."

Dream laughs, finally breaking from the adamant veneer of ice and caution. "What?" he snorts. "You know where to stick me with a knife? Oh, sorry. A weed whacker?"

George tips his head back, choking on a tangle of annoyance and laughter. "Fuck *off* with that already." An unwitting giggle escapes his lips, and he wants to swallow back the sound immediately.

Because Dream's lips part at the noise, pupils dilating as he looks at George like he's *worth* something. The bob of the alpha's throat is slow, fingers spreading across the table as if he wants to reach over to take George's hand. George blinks, dark wood and splintered light wavering in his vision. He thinks that he just might let him.

It shouldn't be like this, George thinks. Even though they've known each other for several months now, there's no explanation for why his heart splinters at the intensity in Dream's eyes, the way his soul sings whenever Dream grants him a sunshine-filled smile. It makes him feel desperate. Pathetic and lonely. Longing for the curve of a warm body at his back. On his hips, over the needy throbbing of his abdomen.

It's as if Dream can sense his need, the malevolent maw of desire that threatens to sweep and devour George whole. The alpha leans forward, bracing his forearms on the table. George doesn't let himself peek at the swath of skin that appears from his neckline.

"Did you miss me?" he asks, voice low and quiet.

George shoots a warning glare at him, tipping his head towards Sapnap and Quackity, but Dream doesn't relent. He just waits for George's response, still and silent. Light fractures over his hair and is swallowed by the dark shelves that bracket their little table. Even Quackity's mindless humming to silent music and the rustle of Sapnap's clothing isn't enough to distract from George.

"It's only been a couple of days," George says, equally as soft.

“You didn’t answer my question.”

Dream’s eyes are blackholes, dotted with stretched stars and collapsing moons. George can see eternity in them, a wicked promise that hinges on his answer. And he lets himself consider the merits of responding.

There’s a certain kind of pleasure in the quicksilver back-and-forth that flows between them. Lighting sparks and ash snowflakes decorate witty words, jolts of dopamine that invade George’s system with every line of banter. He knows that he could respond with an irreverent smile, a brush-off to curtail the desire that he sees in Dream’s eyes.

But the quietness in the alpha’s gaze makes him falter. It shouldn’t be biology—Dream is the farthest thing from an omega that George could imagine. But it somehow *is*, nonetheless. Because every thrum of his blood seems to yield to the desire in George’s chest. It’s illogical, irrational, and unwise to boot.

He just can’t stop. Perhaps it’s time to plunge into the deep end. Close his eyes and lean into the fall. Damn the consequences and finally dare to hope.

George doesn’t look away from the dying stars within Dream’s eyes. “I did,” he admits. “Miss you, that is.”

His words are as soft as a butterfly’s wings, gentle powder flaking away in thumbprints of translucent white. But the softness is worth it, because Dream’s scent flares at the admission—rich and deep and all-consuming.

He doesn’t break eye contact with George as he leans over to tug Sapnap’s earbuds away, the thin wire dangling from a finger. Dream jerks a sharp chin towards the empty paper and scattering of crumbs at the center of the table.

“George and I are going to grab some more food. We’ll be back in a little while.”

Sapnap remains blissfully oblivious, cheerfully humming before gluing his eyes back to his phone. But the promise inspires a shudder that races across George’s spine. Spider legs crawl across his shoulder blades, and a blush skitters across his cheeks as Dream walks around the table to reach George’s side.

He helps George up from the chair, placing a gentle hand at his lower back to usher him down a row of bookshelves. George can feel the heat of his skin through the thin cotton, and resists the urge to walk a bit faster.

Quackity and Sapnap are soon left behind as the scent of parchment swallows them whole. The university library is a spacious, well-lit place. Green velvet armchairs are doused on golden light, and the long, dark tables flash with varnish. But Dream doesn’t intend to guide them into luxurious common areas or search for snacks as he told Sapnap.

He leads George into the narrow aisles between bookshelves, farther and farther until flickering silver light replaces steadfast gold. It paints Dream in chiaroscuro, a Renaissance painting come to life. The hollows of his fingers are casted in shadow, their grip on George’s wrist resolute. His hair takes on the sheen of burning stars, silvery hue mingling with tawny locks and spilling down his cheeks.

When he glances back at George, his eyes are wholly dark.

“I don’t think we’ll find any cookies in the annex,” George murmurs. The noise is swallowed up

by darkness and parchment paper.

“Who knows? We can try our luck. Bring back a few dust bunnies for Sapnap, if nothing else.” Dream flashes a disarming grin, teeth a scythe of white in the growing darkness.

Indeed, as they venture deeper into the dilapidated stacks, the scent of dust and ink greets George’s nose. The bookshelves press close, as if trying to contain their secrets, their hushed whispers. It forces George closer to Dream’s back, fingers clutching the denim loop of his jeans.

“Are you sure that this isn’t an elaborate plan to murder me?” George quips as Dream leads them to the end of the bookshelves and down a steel-coated staircase.

His scent is even stronger in the tight space, and razor-tipped moths alight in George’s stomach.

“Nope.” Waxy lighting wavers around Dream’s fine edges as they venture onto another level of bookshelves. “I would’ve done that a long time ago.”

His smile peeks through the words, so George stifles the urge to shove him to the floor. “Why are we here, then?” he challenges.

Perhaps it’s due to their location underground, but George is decidedly colder than he was ten minutes ago. He wraps his arms around himself and trudges after Dream, leather-bound books blurring in his vision. The bookshelves seem to converge at the end of the row, forming an almost-unbroken expanse of ink and lettering.

“I just wanted to show you something that I discovered a little while ago.” When Dream shrugs, George can see his shoulders moving through his shirt. The alpha follows the edge of the last bookshelf with his fingertips, heading to the corner of the cramped area.

To George’s surprise, it isn’t a dead end or a maintenance closet. Although the scent of dust is still present, the pervasive coldness fades as they enter a small space. It’s a little room furnished with a paisley-patterned armchair and lined with sturdy mahogany bookshelves. There’s a low table in front of the chair, and George nearly breaks his shins as he stumbles into the middle of the room.

“What is this place?” he murmurs, turning in a slow circle and registering the feel of Dream’s fingers on his waist.

Warm light suddenly floods the space as Dream turns on a small lamp that sits on a desk. Little tassels dangle from the edges of the lampshade, and George marvels at the lithe shadows that are projected onto the wood-paneled walls as a result.

“I used to come here as an undergrad,” Dream answers, collapsing onto the armchair with a small sigh of contentment. George ignores the puff of dust that fills the air at the movement. “Working on papers and whatnot. I think I fell asleep on this chair approximately twenty times while trying to finish my capstone thesis, but I thankfully got it done. What do you think?”

The space is nice, George admits to himself. The lamplight is soft, and the room is small enough that it heats up easily. Although George attended a different university a twenty-minute bus ride away, he could easily see himself studying here.

“I like it. Knowing me, I’d lock myself here for hours and make excuses not to come out,” he chuckles. “Buy myself a sandwich and live in this ugly armchair throughout finals week.”

Dream’s smile is a soft, silent thing. His voice is a caress. “My little bookworm.”

George's heart fights against his rib cage, a little staccato of pattering beats. "I'm not your anything," he reminds softly.

But Dream doesn't seem put out. His fingers are deliberate as they trace over the floral patterning of the small sofa, and the tilt of his head is entirely too aggravating.

"Are you sure about that? You're the one who chose to follow me. Alone. In the dark."

George snorts a little at the imagery, daring a few steps closer until he's almost touching Dream where he sits on the armchair. "If you're trying to scare me, it isn't working. It'll take more than the dark to do that. Add a few spiders and you might get me, but otherwise you're off-base."

"Spiders?" Dream teases. The lamplight catches in the ring of his pupils until twin bursts of flame fill the darkness. "I didn't know that a measly insect is all that's needed to take you down."

"Arachnid," George corrects helpfully.

Dream rolls his eyes. "Smartass."

"Simpleton," he retorts in return. "Besides, I'm not *scared* of them. It's just the thought of all those legs..." George shudders, arms wrapped around himself once again.

Dream's laugh is partially smothered by the warmth of the lamp, the heavy air between them. "They only have eight legs, George."

"Eight more than needed," George protests stubbornly.

He wants to treasure that small smile, the little quirk of pink lips indicating that Dream is amused but doesn't want to show it. The heat from the alpha's body is intoxicating, and George lets himself stumble a few steps forward until his thighs brush Dream's knees.

The slow raise of Dream's brow is as infuriating as it is familiar. George lets himself press closer, hoping to trace the contours of the languid movement with his thumbs.

"Why don't you get *your* legs over here?" Dream asks, widening his thighs to bracket George.

"I thought you were supposed to show me around the place," he breathes, words as soft as spidersilk and the motes of dust that dance in the golden light between them.

Dream shrugs, a nonchalant little thing. "You caught me," he murmurs as he leans forward to draw George into his lap. Once his legs are settled around his hips, Dream continues. "I had ulterior motives all along."

Perhaps the press of Dream's body against his own is what makes George bold. Or perhaps it's the fact that he's starting to enjoy these little encounters, enjoy the witty bite of Dream's words and the smoky fragrance of his skin. He presses forwards, aligning their hips together in a sultry movement. When George speaks, he knows that his voice is husky, streaked with salt and sugar.

"Do you see fit to divulge some of those *ulterior motives*?"

He follows Dream's eyes as they trail up his body before landing on his own. Fringed with fine lashes, the pupils are blown, something heady and sweet lacing the jade depths. When strong fingers reach to grip his hips, George stifles a whimper. It escapes anyways, almost swallowed by Dream's slow breathing and flinty intensity.

“I knew you would be at the library,” the alpha starts slowly. “With Sapnap and Quackity, I mean.”

“Why didn’t you come?” George’s voice is small, fingers bunched in the fabric of Dream’s shirt.

“I wanted to.” Dream’s hair curls at his temples as he tips his head back to meet George’s gaze. “I did, George. I just didn’t know if you wanted me there.”

George frowns, confusion creasing his brow. “Why wouldn’t I want you there?”

Dream huffs out an exasperated little sound. He’s the one to break eye contact then, as if looking at George’s face would make him reveal a bit too much. He instead guides George to slump atop his chest, and buries his head into the curve of his shoulder. When Dream speaks, his lips brush the curve of George’s ear.

“I know that we agreed on some things that other night. About us continuing what we did.” George nods slowly, remembering the morning that they’d awoken together, tangled in silken sheets with conditions spilling from their lips.

Dream’s breath is a rush of air against George’s neck. “I didn’t know if you really wanted that,” he continues. “If you changed your mind. And I didn’t know if I could look at you today in the library and force myself not to want that. To want *you*.”

George’s mind quiets at the admission. Dream’s body is warm and his voice is soft, curling through the air and winding around George’s heartstrings. He can almost convince himself that Dream doesn’t hate him. “But you came anyway,” George prompts.

Dream laughs, a small little thing. “You know that I can never stay away for long.” George thinks about days of silence broken by a text from Dream. He thinks about spontaneous appearances at a cafe just in time for a morning cup of coffee, the afternoons Dream spent lingering in Sapnap’s room watching them play Valorant while he lounged alone on the bed.

“You’re obsessed.” George tries to smile a bit, but the joke falls flat. He can feel Dream’s shrug on his shoulder, hair shifting against his neck.

“I’m not going to deny it,” Dream laughs. “When Quackity texted me, I drove over here without a second thought.”

George sighs as Dream’s hand finds its way under his shirt to stroke his back. His fingers are calloused over the bumps of his vertebrae, soothing aches that George never even knew existed. “Didn’t know you could drive,” he breathes.

Dream’s fingers lift to stroke the fine skin at his nape before dipping to trace the naked line of his hips. George shivers at the touch, unconsciously leaning into the warmth of Dream’s hand.

When the alpha speaks, his voice is a low rumble that George can feel in his chest. “I didn’t tell you because I knew that you’d exploit it. I don’t want an insufferable little thing like you using me as a chauffeur.”

Dream tilts his head back to look at George, the ghost of a smile on his lips. It’s endearing enough that it veers on the edge of being infuriating. George leans forward to brush his lips against the skin of Dream’s throat.

“It’s too late for that.”

There's a beat of silence before Dream responds. "I suppose it is."

His voice is as soft as butterfly wings. A second later, George discovers that his lips are, too.

Dream tastes like cinnamon and coffee, overlaid with a tinge of smoke. It's addictive, and George can't help but wind his fingers through tawny strands of hair. When he accidentally tugs, Dream nips at his bottom lip. Pearlescent canines leave his mouth reddened and swollen, a rosebud about to bloom.

Breaths come as ragged shards of air as they part, fingers still twined together. "You're hard," Dream murmurs, pupils dilated as he holds George's gaze.

"Take care of it then," he retorts, letting himself roll against the heat of Dream's hips.

The other boy groans in response, sucking bruises onto George's neck as his fingers trail downwards. "I wish I met you in undergrad," he mutters against mottled skin, roses blooming in his wake. George moans as Dream's fingers reach into his pants to pull out his cock, stroking the tender skin. Thunderclouds brew at the base of his spine, ozone crackling through his veins.

"Yeah?" he croaks out, Dream's wrist twisting on an upstroke and causing a lightning-shock of pleasure to seep into his blood. "How would we have met?"

Dream's breaths are ragged as he focuses on working George to the edge, crystal spires shattering with every touch. "We could have taken the same graphic design class. It wouldn't be the introductory one—you hate being constrained and I would have thought that the intermediary one was more interesting."

George's cock leaks precum over Dream's fingers, droplets of liquid dampening warm skin. When he looks down, the flushed tip peeks from within Dream's fist, slit dewed with pleasure. The sight makes him even more desperate, hand wrapped around Dream's shoulder and hips rocking against Dream's own.

Dream's hard, too. George can feel it with every movement he makes, embers flickering in his vision as euphoria threatens to barrel down his spine. "And then what?" he whimpers as Dream's thumb grazes the sensitive underside of his head. "Let me guess, we spotted each other across the room and became enamored at first sight."

"No," Dream chuckles, digging a fingernail into George's slit. The pleasure-pain of it makes him wail, hips bucking up into Dream's fist. His cock is flushed cherry-red and dripping precum over tan fingers. When the alpha resumes a steady, merciless pace, George wants to cry.

"We would've hated each other," Dream whispers in his ear. "The professor would pair us together for a project. You would think that I'm an incompetent idiot, and I'd think that you're an insufferable asshole used to getting your own way." His strokes are getting rougher and rougher, George whimpering after each pass of his palm. "Making you lose your control would be the highlight of my day. Watching you worry your pretty little head over our project while I fucked you into the sheets at night? Pure bliss."

George moans at the imagery, saltwater pearls tumbling into the air as he closes his eyes. He's practically sopping wet now, pheromones roiling around him and scent glands aching.

"You'd love that, wouldn't you?" he manages to hiss through clenched teeth. Each snap of his hips towards Dream's fist wrings more pleasure from his body, like a wet rag being squeezed dry. "Stuffing my hole full of alpha cock and relishing the way that I cry for you? Pumping me with

your cum and knot until I'm like an omega bitch that you'd want during a rut?"

Dream groans at that, nipping his teeth at George's skin dangerously close to his scent gland. George cries at the graze of his teeth, baring his throat while tears slip from behind closed lashes. Like a tether snapped, the movements of Dream's hand quickens and animalistic lust fills his eyes.

Pearlescent canines are bared as Dream snarls, words spilling into the air like a wicked undertow. "Exactly. You'd be fucking *mine*, George. I would buy you those stupid knock-off Red Bulls that you love, remind you to eat during finals week. I would've taken you to my football games, made you wear my jersey in bed after I won. And *yes*," Dream snarls, fingernail dipping to caress George's swollen slit once more. "I'd fuck you again and again and again. Until you're gagging for it, tears across your pretty face and stomach pumped with my come. Because you'd want me as much as I want you, beg for me to mount you in the middle of the library or the football pitch or even that fucking graphic design class."

The image of Dream buried inside him is too much for George to bear. With Dream's words echoing in his ear, opalescent blooms of fire flare behind his closed eyes. Slow tears drip rivulets of salt down his cheeks. George is barely aware of his fingers gripping the cotton of Dream's shirt, his cock jerking as he spills all over his stomach.

It's like a flare churns up his insides, sunspots and fireworks turning him upside down. He forgets how to speak, how to *breathe* as he cums, ropes of pleasure left on soft skin.

"Baby?"

Dream's voice is gentle as George comes out of his fog. He's slumped against the alpha's chest, breaths sticky against his skin and tears drying on his cheeks. "I'm good," he croaks back, clearing his throat with a wince after he realizes how ragged he sounds. "Just came so hard that I saw stars for a second." Dream shifts underneath him, and George lifts his head at the movement. "Oh! Do you want me to take care of that for you?"

Dark pupils are still blown out when George peers at Dream's face. "There's no need," the alpha chuckles blindly. A lazy tilt of his head towards his pelvis is accompanied by self-satisfied words. "I already came."

George can't help his snort. He collapses back onto Dream's chest, uncaring of the sweat and cum drying on his skin. "Now it's *you* who finished untouched."

Dream's arms are hesitant as they loop back around George's waist. The touch is gentle, and George wonders about Dream's caution when they've both just finished. "Had to even the scales somehow, huh?" Dream huffs quietly. "Spare you the embarrassment, you know?"

"You're incorrigible," George sighs, casting unwelcome thoughts from his mind. He bathes in a haze of pleasure and endorphins once more, looping his arms around Dream's neck.

He doesn't know how much time they spend in easy silence until the alpha parts his lips. "Would you want to come back here sometime?" The question is nonchalant, but George can feel the way that Dream's fingers tighten around his hips.

George glances at him sidelong. "To study or to fuck?"

"Either. Both."

He's unable to hold in a little giggle. Dream's features relax at the sound, and a grin splits his lips. George watches as he closes his eyes, placing a lazy hand behind his head. The majority of their

clothing is still on, and George flushes as he realizes that they'd just had sex in a university library. His dignity is clearly in the trash, but George doesn't have it in him to dwell upon it.

"You can't have your cake and eat it, too," George laughs.

He can feel Dream's frown, tawny brows drawing together. "That never made sense to me," the alpha complains. His fingers are warm on George's back, little tingles of pleasure shooting up his spine. "If I have a cake, I'd obviously eat it—right?"

"You're an idiot," George chides. His nose brushes against the side of Dream's neck, and he breathes a lungful of smoke and cinnamon. "Shut the hell up and let me close my eyes for a second."

"Don't fall asleep," Dream laughs. "We still have to get Sapnap's cookies. He'll be pissy if we don't."

George gives a little murmur of assent before nestling in the juncture of Dream's shoulder. He doesn't know when he falls asleep, lulled by the steady beating of Dream's heart and the comforting scent of lamplight.

When they wake up, tangled in each other's arms, there's still time to get the cookies. Sapnap and Quackity ignore the hour-long absence and accept them eagerly, none the wiser.

The next few weeks pass in a kind of bliss that George slowly gets used to. His thesis is almost finished, and his work project is going smoothly. George finally found the time to clean his apartment; half-finished cereal bowls are put away in the sink, the laundry is done once a week, and he even finds time to go to Ikea with Dream to buy plants.

His flat is littered with them, ivy trailing over his bookcases and potted azaleas at his window sill. A hart's tongue fern sits beside the television, waxy leaves glistening in the afternoon sun. The springs of lavender and rosemary that Dream chose for the kitchen fill the small space with fragrance, and George inhales deeply whenever he goes to the fridge for a midnight snack.

Quackity complains, of course. ("*We aren't running a fucking botanical garden, George.*") He relents when George buys him the prettiest bunch of african violets and places it on his desk, squarely on top of his law textbook.

George goes to *Le Moment* more often, stuffing himself with those brown sugar donuts and teasing Dream when he pouts. He relents one day, bringing the alpha a singular sugar-coated pastry. The way Dream licks the sweetness off his lips is obscene. The next day, George is there to do it for him.

Quackity and Sapnap remain ever oblivious, inviting them to study sessions and cafe catch-ups without any guile. It's exhilarating, trying to hide their situation from the two betas. George still doesn't know what to call it. A relationship? Not exactly. Friends with benefits? Perhaps.

He just relishes the graze of Dream's knuckles against his own when they sit across the two betas in a cafe booth, thighs pressed together. Dream's quirked smiles become George's secret, the arrogant tilt of his mouth a clandestine mystery. The alpha teases him with a subtle hand high on his thigh, leaving George shuddering with annoyance as he tries to conceal his arousal in the middle of broad daylight.

George is forced to watch the pout of his mouth as Dream blows at the steam over his coffee,

sending the scent of caffeine to mingle with his scent. He's forced to watch Dream laugh at something stupid that Quackity says, engrossed in the unfiltered noises leaving his throat. He thanks the stars that Sapnap and Quackity are betas when Dream traces a deliberate fingernail over George's inner knee.

Only Dream can sense George's arousal, those heightened senses registering the flare of ozone and crackling thunderclouds. He takes George apart in an alleyway behind the coffeeshop. Lips parted around George's cock, Dream looks like a thing from dulcet fantasies. He's all harsh angles and brackish light; his piercing whispers over George's skin in a way that should be sinful, and his fingers are bruising around pale hips.

George stifles his cries with his fist; his knuckles are littered with teeth marks for days. He doesn't regret it, especially when the hickeys littering his hips gleam with frothing lavender-water when he takes a bath.

He repays the favor a few days later, showing up to Dream's work to give him a blowjob in a broom closet. (Dream looks good enough to eat in a crisp button down and slacks.) The way the alpha's eyes blow wide with surprise is enough to keep George going for a few more days, hand moving furtively underneath his waistband at night.

It's a never-ending battle between them, hands and teeth and lips bruising whenever the opportunity arises. Dream destroys him with those quicksilver eyes, sending sneers whenever Quackity and Sapnap are looking. George makes the excuse to linger during movie nights, nestling himself between Dream and the couch while they watch another rerun of *Star Trek*. (Quackity is a staunch *Star Wars* fan to the end and refuses to watch with them, instead choosing to lose at chess against Sapnap).

Dream's lips are popcorn-sticky when he presses them to George's neck at the end of the night. He unravels George like a present, limbs askew and festooned with garlands of pleasure-slick ribbon. The television still flickers with glints of navy blue and white, branding the back of their closed eyelids.

And George forgets to breathe as Dream shows him the stars.

They spend countless nights like this, with legs entwined underneath George's comforter. He runs cold while Dream runs hot; with his back nestled against the alpha's chest and his feet tucked against Dream's legs, George sleeps blissfully.

It's not to say that they don't argue. They bicker over the smallest things, lips parting into sneers and canines dripping arsenic-coated words. George says things that he regrets, and Dream does the same. Snappy tempers are quick to trigger, cheeks blooming with furious rose. Sapnap and Quackity occasionally have to intervene, movie nights ruined by strewn bits of popcorn and abrasive words.

Dream hates George's rigidity, the haughty stiffness of his back and unrelenting stretch of pale fingers. He hates that George can give as good as he gets, expression glassing over like a frozen lake while perfect lips spit poison. Aloof, unyielding, insufferable—he's called George it all before.

George hates Dream's cockiness, the way his brows arch and a smug smile tugs at the corner of his lips. His words are tinted with gasoline, noxious and threatening to burst aflame at any given moment. George becomes familiar with the subtle taunts, the playful jibes that spill from a silver-studded mouth.

But as the weeks pass by, he becomes familiar with Dream's particular brand of cyanide. He rolls his eyes at lemon-dripped quips, knowing that the alpha is likely bored and seeking a reaction. He pokes at Dream's ribs playfully after they have sex, anticipating the way that he grumbles—a perfunctory protest that is eased when he moves closer to George's side.

They still argue over different movies to watch, or when Dream breaks George's favorite bowl and it shatters on the kitchen floor in a starburst of porcelain. But things are going well, even if George doesn't exactly know how to define his relationship with Dream. They haven't talked about it since that first night—not exclusivity, or dating, or even a goddamn acknowledgement of what they're doing together.

George knows that he can't expect Dream to do everything, to continually make the first move. Although he admits that he likes what they're doing, George doesn't know if he's ready for something *more*. If Dream would even want that with him.

He just knows that he likes to wake up in the alpha's arms, the comforting scent of pitch and smoke enveloping him like a makeshift blanket. He likes the way Dream makes him blush at lewd comments and jeering quips, even if he pretends that he doesn't. And he likes the feel of Dream's skin on his, calloused hands searing his neural pathways with blazing warmth.

George wants to bottle up that pleasure, taking little golden sips that he thinks may last an eternity.

“Where is your sense of adventure?” Quackity scowls, beanie slung low on his forehead and rebellious strands of hair peeking out from the navy fabric. “C'mon assholes, I didn't drive for half an hour to loiter around in the sun.”

Sapnap shifts on his feet, face tinged with green and voice positively queasy. “I'm not going on that fucking *monstrosity* again.” He points a shaking finger at the rollercoaster behind them.

It's an ugly thing, a jagged maw of chrome and steel latticework. Quackity fell in love when he first laid eyes on it. He convinced them all to go, citing that adrenaline was good for the soul or some nonsense. George's mistake was listening to him.

He's sure that nail marks are still embedded in Dream's forearm, crescent moons smarting ferociously. Sapnap wasn't much better, squealing with terror plastered all over his features. Even Dream looked nauseous, staggering out of the platform when the ride finally stopped. Only Quackity was left unscathed by the triple-loops of death.

“One more time?” Quackity barbers with his hands spread before him. “Then we can ride something more your speed—one of those kiddie carousels maybe?”

Sapnap scowls. “Fuck off. We already had to listen to your atrocious music for one and a half hours, and now you want me to hurl my guts up through my esophagus? No way.”

George laughs at the imagery, arm brushing Dream's side. They chose the perfect day to make a trip to the amusement park; the sun is bright but shielded by the occasional cloud. Wisps of its substance are dragged across the sky, errant bits of cotton bleeding onto pale blue. His feet are sweaty in his shoes and heart is still pounding, but other than the near-death experience that Quackity forced him to undertake, he's having an amazing time.

Dream seems to be similarly recovered. The jelly-like wobbling of his steps is gone; his hair isn't rakishly mussed from the wind and his own fingers anymore. George wants to fix that.

“What if we try a different ride?” Dream asks desperately. “Or even grab something to eat? Maybe attempt one of those game booths?”

“Dream’s got all the options,” George snorts. He ignores the way the alpha knocks his elbow into his side.

Quackity doesn’t look amused, feet planted apart and arms crossed over his chest. Sunshine batters their shoulders, illuminating the brightly-colored rides and swaths of red-striped tents. George doesn’t know how the beta isn’t sweating in his hoodie, but supposes that anything is possible when Quackity is involved.

“We’ve already been to five different coasters, stuffed our faces with popcorn, and won Sapnap that stupid stuffed bear that he gave away to a random kid.” Quackity’s glower makes Dream shuffle.

George sighs uncomfortably. His shirt is clinging to his shoulder blades, and the sun is scalding over the dark strands of his hair. They’ll never be able to make a decision like this, so George supposes that he’ll have to speak up before he dies of sunstroke.

“What about this? Dream and I will explore some of the booths together while you both tackle a couple more rides?”

It sounds fairly reasonable to George, but Sapnap and Quackity don’t seem to agree.

Sapnap’s mouth twists into a puckered thing streaked with lemon juice, the seeds trailing down his chin. “Why do I have to be lumped in with *him*?”

“Why are you complaining?” Quackity scowls in return. “I’m the one stuck with a blundering buffoon.”

George’s sigh is tempered only by the feel of Dream’s fingers against his own. Warm skin grazing his wrist, he takes a deep breath of the sugar-scented air. Annoyance still remains, casting a clouded sheen over his vision.

“Stick together if you want, I don’t care. You’re going to get along even if it takes twenty more roller coaster rides.” Sapnap blanches at Quackity’s delighted grin. “And because I can’t handle both of your whining anymore,” George tacks on.

The betas apparently seem to heed his words, because Quackity turns to Sapnap. “See? Even George thinks that I can last longer than you.”

Appealing to Sapnap’s competitive spirit is a surefire way to raise the beta’s ire. “You’ll be eating those words, Quackity.” Arms crossed over his chest and feet planted apart, he looks ready to take on the world.

Quackity has him right where he wants him. George looks on in dismay, Dream in amusement. “Alright then,” the beta chirps, sunshine falling over his brow. “Lead me to the first ride.”

Sapnap only balks for a moment before turning on his heel, Quackity following right behind him. George watches them veer past a cotton candy stand, turn to avoid a gaggle of children. They’re swallowed up by the crowd and the sizzling air a moment after.

“That went spectacularly,” Dream says dryly. When George turns to him, the alpha’s eyes are glittering with amusement. There’s a curl on his cheekbone that he aches to touch, but George stuffs his fists in his pockets instead.

“Well it worked, didn’t it?”

“I suppose it did.” Dream works the syllables in his mouth as if he’s chewing them, carefully considering their weight. “Where are we going now, captain?”

George drives his elbow in the alpha’s side and is met with a whoosh of breath. “Dunno,” he remarks casually, scanning over the rows of brightly-colored tents while Dream struggles to breathe.

Warm fingers wrap around his wrist; George looks down. Dream’s skin is still sticky with sugar, but he can almost feel the flames licking up his arm. The alpha’s eyes are ringed with tawny lashes, bathed in honey from the sunshine.

“Do you want to explore, then? Find a few cool booths and brag to Sapnap later?”

George allows himself a rare smile, pink lips parting. The color coating Dream’s cheeks is from the sun, but George tells himself that it’s a reaction to *him*. “That sounds lovely.”

Dream’s piercing is a wink of silver as he grins in return, pearlescent canines flashing. This time, he entwines his fingers with George’s own as they venture into the crowd.

They wander from booth to booth, dust kicking at their ankles and eyes assaulted by bright lights. Steering clear from the rides, they explore fortune tellers and mirror-rooms. The scent of incense and jasmine coils in their lungs while smoky reflections waver in their vision.

Dream spills sarcastic quips throughout it all, muttering that the scent of the fortune teller’s perfume is more likely to give her a headache than eternal clarity, and complaining that the distorted mirrors make him look huge.

Maybe it’s the feeling of Dream’s hand still pressed against his own, but George allows himself to laugh. Tether coming undone, coils of rope release as sunshine bathes his skin. His stomach hurts from the force of his joy as Dream tugs him from one booth to another, seeking the best ways to coax more laughter from his lips.

They spend one hour parading about dusty walkways and brightly-lit shops. It soon turns into two, the sun dwindling from its apex until it mingles with the scent of cotton candy in the air. None of it rivals the heat of Dream next to him, the spicy-sweet scent of his body saturating the air.

George has taken lungfuls of his pheromones, lapped at the creases of the alpha’s scent gland. But he feels intoxicated as he’s never been before, euphoric merely at the calloused press of Dream’s hand against his. Eternal ecstasy smears across the corners of his mind as he takes in Dream’s unfiltered smile, the stark press of his tattoos against the faded-white of his shirt.

“Do you want to grab something to eat before we hit a couple more stalls?” George’s smile is a soft thing, buoyed by the excitement in Dream’s eyes. “I know that you can’t go more than a few hours before being fed,” he finishes dryly.

“You read my mind,” the alpha grins. They stop in front of a mini bowling lawn, Dream’s back to the plaster-white walls. “I’ve been craving funnel cakes for a while now.”

George laughs at the delicate pout on his face. The expression is juxtaposed with the strength of golden arms, the winding ink that spatters across his neck. It’s ridiculously endearing, and George can’t stop the laugh that leaks past his lips like popping bubbles.

“Alright, alright. I’ll go grab the cakes while you entertain yourself here. I’m sure you can manage

to do that, right?” George raises a skeptical brow.

Dream lifts his hands in mock defense. “I *can* exist on my own without conducting irreparable damage, Georgie.”

“I hope so,” he sniffs, striding away from the alpha.

He finds the stall easily, from Dream’s repeated ogling after they passed through the area. The scent of brown sugar and cinnamon fills the air, an enticing combination that makes George’s stomach rumble despite himself. He places an order for two of the desserts, standing to the side awkwardly with his arms crossed over his chest.

It takes a bit longer than he’d like, something about limited supply and the icing machine acting up. George didn’t even know that icing machines existed. Foot tapping with irritation, it takes another twenty minutes to finally unjam the machine—or whatever that entails.

He’s handed a white paper bag with a jubilant grin. When he peers into the edge, vanilla and cinnamon-coated dough waft decadence into the air. Sunshine singes George’s cheeks while he walks to where he left Dream. He can’t resist lifting one of the funnel cakes from the paper casing and taking a bite.

Sugar explodes on his tongue, and George closes his eyes with pleasure. A happy little murmur leaves his mouth as he finishes the bite. George thinks that the wait was well worth it. He hopes that Dream will think the same.

He winds past food stalls and game booths, searching for a head of endearingly-mussed hair. He stands on his toes, peering past the crowd of people to spot Dream’s signature grin. But the alpha is nowhere in sight.

George thinks that he can smell a trace of his scent, smoky-sweet and rising above the jumble of other aromas. He tries to follow it, winding past trundling carts piled high with food. Dodging children and adults alike, he ignores the complaints and muttered curses that he receives, instead focused on finding Dream.

His chest is tight for a reason that he can’t name, paper bag crumpling within his fingers. The sun scalds his eyes in a way that burns, and damp strands of hair fall onto his forehead. The sense of panic rising through his veins is unavoidable as he scans the crowd to find a person who isn’t there.

He shouldn’t feel this way, spiders crawling through his veins and dumping their venom in his bloodstream. Sparks skitter at his vision, and George thinks that it *must* be something to do with being an alpha, because what other explanation is there? He hasn’t scent-marked Dream, they haven’t bonded in the way that alphas and omegas are meant to do. His feelings are out of place, unneeded and uncharacteristic.

Latent possessiveness is an alpha trait, and perhaps George has been teetering too close to the edge recently.

A flash of tawny hair shifts in his periphery. George doesn’t think it’s Dream at first, accustomed to the swirling mass of young children and amusement park workers alike. But then he sees him.

There’s a stunning smile across his face as Dream tries to aim a plastic water gun at a target several feet away. The neon green is garish in his palms, doing nothing to highlight the warm glow of his skin or the dark ink crawling up the side of his neck. The muscles in his arm flex as he aims the

gun, shoots, and misses.

Dream's laugh makes a pit form in George's stomach. He stands alone under the sun, heart pounding rabbit-fast against the ivory spires of his ribcage.

George's mouth is dry, full of icing sugar and something deeper than dread.

Because there's an omega standing next to Dream, smiling as if the world is about to end. He can smell the boy from here, a cloying bubblegum that he swears he's detected before. Detected on Dream's skin, his clothing when the alpha crashed their movie night for the first time. He still remembers the bruise painted on that golden throat, nestled in between the curling lines of a dark tattoo with enough intensity to rankle.

Maybe George should have realized then that Dream was someone special. Someone *wanted*. He should've acted earlier, sinking his teeth in deep and painting all the exposed skin that he could reach with mottled bruises. Because watching Dream smile with someone that isn't him is the sweetest pain imaginable.

It bubbles through his veins, hot and consuming. And when the omega—dressed in the red and whites of an amusement park worker—giggles at something Dream says, George's vision is tinged with monsoon winds. But he stands still, unable to move his feet through the gritty dust at his ankles.

Useless.

The paper bag crinkles in his hands as he watches the omega help Dream aim his water gun at the targets, placing a slow hand on his arm. Pain spikes in George's chest as Dream doesn't make any move to push the boy away. The alpha looks down on him with an amused smile, brows drawing together and dimple appearing on his left cheek. He used to look at *George* like that.

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

Half-moons bite into his palms, and George grits his teeth when he sees the omega flash Dream a flirtatious smile after the alpha successfully hits a target. He watches their lips move, sugary words dissipating into the wind.

It's nothing, George tells himself. He just doesn't want to smell that omega on Dream when the alpha fucks him later tonight.

Because George has come to know that Dream isn't like that. He's funnier than George wants to admit. And he's faithful, would have the wherewithal to do anything for his partner. But George isn't his partner. He's merely an acquaintance turned fuckbuddy turned friend.

And George finally admits to himself that he hates it. That he doesn't like to share. That he wants Dream entirely to himself.

The omega is still plastered to Dream's side, practically *glued* to the alpha's hip. George can feel his lips peeling from his teeth in a snarl that rumbles his throat. It's stupid, the enviousness that churns his stomach with tendrils of flowing ivy.

But they look perfect together. The omega smiles sweetly up at Dream, docile and delicate in a way that George could never be. His hair curls at the ends, colored a dark onyx and touched by sunlight. Almond-shaped eyes are set against unblemished skin, porcelain-pale and flushed with the slightest bloom of color. He's like a doll, an amber gaze roving across Dream's features with gentle intent. Even his garish uniform doesn't make him seem less angelic.

George can almost imagine them together, spindle-thin limbs entwined with Dream's own. The omega would bend in a way that he could never, servile and obedient. He knows that biological imperatives can be a set of iron-cast shackles, with the delicate topics of bonding and heats and mates.

It never bothered George, who has his own preferences. But he wonders if Dream is the same, if he'd prefer the biological compatibility of an omega instead. It makes him sick to his stomach, twisting thorns embedding in flesh and bone. And he still stands there, watching the omega's hand on Dream's arm.

George knows that this is jealousy, knows that the past few weeks coalesced into something he could never predict. He can admit that he feels something for Dream beyond the physical. But the alpha has so many options, and doesn't seem to see George beyond a casual sex partner to blow off some steam.

The issue comes up again: George is an alpha. He can't give Dream what he wants, what he needs. He won't bow to every command or whim, prostrate himself on the undeserving knees of the revered. Dream is the sun, and the omega beside him is the dappled moonshine that only exists due to a mirage of reflected light.

Who is George to compete with something like that?

He feels disgusted with himself, fingers sticky with residual sugar and heart slow as it slams against his ribs. George's scent is seeping from him, hot and confused and despondent. He knows that he's running from something bigger than himself when he turns away from the scene, but doesn't have it within him to see their smiles up close.

All he wants is to get away, scent swirling around him and feeling smaller and smaller by the second. He looks up and sees a Ferris wheel, spinning in a slow rictus of color. Maybe up there he could get some air through his veins, a sip of breath to fill his collapsing lungs.

So he turns around, registering a flash of jade in his periphery before disappearing into the crowd behind him.

The paper bag is crumpled to his chest as he leaves Dream behind, eyes steadfastly trained on bright lights and spinning metal. George's cheeks are burning, shoulders prickling underneath his shirt. But he doesn't let himself fall apart, instead reigning in his scent as best he could.

He slows when he approaches the Ferris wheel. It's in slow rotation, a gentle swing that catches George's eye with bits of twinkling metal. The sky begins to split in shades of plum and persimmon, painting a sunset behind the silver behemoth. There aren't too many people on the ride, a scarce smattering of couples that look like twin magnets in the distance.

George's mouth twists grimly as he gets in line, shoes scuffing small clouds of dust before him. It's a slow day apparently, and there are only a few children in front of George. They chatter amongst themselves, sharing a crinkled bag of popcorn and spilling half on the ground when they jostle one another.

Two bored-looking attendants stand further ahead, lazy fingers drifting over the glossy silver and chrome controls. George spares them a perfunctory glance: a beta with a navy-blue baseball cap shading her features and an alpha with his head propped on an upraised arm.

George looks down at the ground again. His hair sticks to the back of his nape, and he tries his best to think about nothing at all.

The ride stops slowly, a whirring contraption of steel that reaches its apex before sputtering to a halt. George stands awkwardly as the previous passengers scramble off. He averts his eyes from happy couples, hands twined together and eyes limned with adoration. Although there aren't too many people, the surge of scents is intense, and George finds himself stupidly longing for familiarity.

Thankfully, the line moves quickly and George doesn't have to wait long. He brandishes his day pass awkwardly, glancing over as an attendant perks up at the sight of him. The other alpha is dressed in signature reds, and lifts his head from the cup of his palm. Pink lips curve into a pleasant smile. His hair is a sort of sandy-blond, and he has rich, brown eyes set against warm skin.

It's a nice combination. He looks sweet, friendly—even the scent of *alpha* radiating off him, like desert air and mint and strawberry chapstick, isn't unpleasant. George offers him a small smile. The alpha takes it as an invitation to speak.

"Hello!" he greets, a beaming smile casting sunflower petals across his cheeks.

George lets his gaze dip down to the nametag on the alpha's chest. *Liam* is written in a careless scrawl across the smooth plastic. "Hi," George echoes—to be polite.

Liam grins again, and the beta beside him gives a cursory dip of her chin as a greeting. She turns her attention back to her phone, fiddling with the heavy metal and slick glass. George wonders if Dream noticed his absence yet. If George's phone is littered with calls and texts. He can't bring himself to check.

"Sweltering today, isn't it?"

Liam's voice cuts through the air, a gentle rip current that laps at George's skin. It jolts him from unpleasant thoughts, mooring him to soft stability. George is on the fraying end of his rope, but does his best not to let it show.

It *is* hot outside, but the bland remark is uttered with earnest, sunflower-yellow undertones. George doesn't really want to deal with this, but plasters on a small smile to be polite.

"This isn't meant to be some kind of pick up line, right?" he chides, an easy grin and lilting words belying the turbulence in the pit of his stomach.

The alpha flusters a little, raising his hands and stuttering out dropped consonants and broken vowels. "I—I didn't, I mean—*no*. Unless, um—you wanted it to be?"

George can't help a small laugh at his earnest fumbling. "Alright, lover boy," he snorts. "Smooth."

Liam shifts on his feet as his coworker laughs through raised fingers. "Shut *up*, Tessa. Anyways," he says, turning back to George, "that wasn't meant to be an innuendo about how hot you are, or anything. Hypothetically."

George lifts a brow. "Hypothetically," he agrees.

It's harmless, this little back and forth. It'll go nowhere, especially when George has his sights set on someone else. But the image of that omega is still branded in his brain, and he doesn't want to think about what he might find if he goes back there. He doesn't know if it'd be worse if Dream still stands with sunshine and sugar clinging to his arm. Or if Dream would be gone, nightmares of hidden bruises and poisonous lips springing alive.

They silently watch as the last passengers disembark from the Ferris wheel, the group of children

before George getting rowdy in their eagerness.

“Are you here with anyone?” Liam asks, turning his head to let sandy locks of hair fall from his eyes.

George’s weak smile disappears at the reminder. He has no idea where the hell Sapnap and Quackity are—raising trouble, no doubt. And George doesn’t want to think about Dream.

He’s all alone.

He offers the truth. “Just a couple of friends.” Liam hums in response, leaning forward to rest his chin on his palm.

Because it’s the truth—Dream *is* just a friend, no matter how much George longs for something more. Even if it’s that alpha possessiveness at work, George has never felt this way before. The desire to claw free from his skin, to rake at Dream’s shoulders until they both bleed. It’s a delicate give and take, what he has going on with Dream.

Although they both bend on occasion, their arrangement is a partnership of equals. George may capitulate occasionally, indulging Dream’s desires for control, but Dream indulges him in return. It works for them.

The spokes of the Ferris wheel blur in his vision as he contemplates the few months that went by since his initial date with Sapnap. So much, yet so little has changed since then. George feels like he’s known Dream since forever, the scent of his shampoo and skin emblazoned in his brainmatter.

But in some ways, nothing has changed. The same antagonism lies between them, twisting ropes of violet that rise to the surface whenever they argue. And Dream may still think of him as an acquaintance benefited by an easy lay. George doesn’t think it’s like that, but doesn’t have the courage to ask.

“Have you been on a ride like this before?” Liam incorrectly interprets his pinched expression as fear. Jolted from his thoughts, George pastes on a weak smile.

“Yeah, it’s been a while though.”

The last time he visited was for a school trip in primary. George doesn’t mention that he threw up a stomachful of caramel apples and cotton candy after.

His chest still races with residual nausea as he glances at the contraption. The children ahead of him are giggling as they clamber into their seats, and the noise makes George feel sick. He can only imagine what it would feel like up there, with empty air beneath his feet and wind whipping through his hair.

Suddenly George regrets his decision to stand in line, biting his lip as he looks up at the latticework of steel and iron. The worst case scenarios are easy to imagine—with George’s luck, he wouldn’t be surprised if the entire thing came crashing down with him inside.

George can feel his face paling at the thought, and he clenches his hand, wishing Dream was there to brush palm against palm. But he only feels foolish as the people in front of him settle into their seats, well aware that Dream is still with the other omega, flirting or doing god knows what.

Stepping up to the platform, George knows that Liam can probably smell the acrid scent coming off him in waves. Monsoon water ripples from his skin and ozone cascades through his veins as shadowy coils of anxiety wind in his heart.

Through his panic, George registers a gentle hand on his elbow. When he glances over, Liam's features are furrowed with concern. "I can come up with you, if you want."

His tone is clearly hopeful, and George knows that he shouldn't encourage him, but the reminder of that omega's moonlit smile still rankles at him. Besides, the intricate construction of metal is slightly intimidating, and George feels better about his chances of survival if he has an amusement park worker with him.

"Are you sure? I don't want to keep you from your job."

"It's no bother," Liam beams, still entirely too close for comfort. George shifts away slightly, and looks down at his battered converse. "I'm due for a break soon anyways."

George turns to the other worker for confirmation. She looks away from her phone, dark wisps of hair curling under her baseball cap. With a roll of her eyes, she affirms. "Please do. He'll whine like a bitch if he misses a free ride with a pretty boy like you."

Liam blushes, but George doesn't say anything. Taking his silence as an affirmative, the alpha ushers George into the little cart. "Let's go."

Gingerly sliding into the seat, George scoots over to make way for the other alpha. The scent of dry air and crisp mint is even stronger up close, and he has to fight the urge to wrinkle his nose. George is already sweating, the plastic seat sticking uncomfortably to his thighs, and belatedly wonders how much more of this he'll have to endure.

"What's your name?" Liam asks once they're settled, turning a charming smile his way.

"George," he says politely, if a bit blandly.

Thankfully, Liam leaves it at that for now, turning to his coworker to give her a quick nod. The beta slides bored eyes to him before turning to the control panel beneath her fingers. George balls his fists in his lap, paper bag crinkling in his grip. The one remaining funnel cake is surely squashed from the pressure, but it's not like Dream's here to complain.

The Ferris wheel jolts in a shuddering wheeze, and George's knuckles whiten as they lift into the air. Colors blur before his eyes, kaleidoscopes that accompany the feeling of his stomach dropping to his ass. The only sound is of his shallow breaths and the wind rushing through his hair. Liam's thigh brushes his, but the alpha doesn't say anything. George moves away.

When they reach the zenith, everything is broadcasted in miniature. He can see colorful tents and dwindling crowds, piles of stuffed animals and cotton candy machines. The sky is a deep mulberry behind them, and George feels as if he could touch the horizon.

Liam is next to him, babbling something that George doesn't care to listen to. Despite the wind ruffling through his hair and the tranquility that slumbers hundreds of feet above the ground, George can't seem to get a lungful of air. He feels hollow, like a fragile glass bauble or an empty ice cream scoop.

It gives him a pang, the realization that Dream could have been here with him. Their hands would be entwined securely together, instead of the alpha that tentatively presses against George's side. Dream would quip at George's white knuckles and shaky fingers, would point out random people below them until George forgets to be afraid. Maybe they'd even kiss, like a cheesy couple in those rom-coms that always seem to end with tender *I love you's*.

The thought makes George unhappier than ever. His lips are pressed into a thin line as they slowly

come full circle, gradual creaking lessening as their seat approaches the ground. Liam opens the cart, and George wordlessly steps out. His knees are slightly shaky as he heads back down the walkway.

George is still trying to grasp a hold on himself when the alpha turns to him, a sheepish smile on his face.

“That was fun! I mean—I hope *you* had fun. Considering that you were apprehensive and all.” The look George gives him makes his smile slip slightly, but Liam plows on. “Not apprehensive—just, you know.” He fumbles over his words in a way that George should find endearing. It’s just annoying. “Anyways, I was wondering if I could get your number? Maybe we could try out a few more of the rides here?”

George is taken aback, the earnestness in the alpha’s eyes contrasting with the subtle innuendo.

“Um—” he begins, words trailing off as he looks into Liam’s eyes with a wince.

The alpha was sweet, reassuring him atop the Ferris wheel with a gentle press on his arm. But George doesn’t want sweetness, doesn’t want tender obsequiousness. He wants fire and flame to match his own, sharp words and loud laughs that make him revel at the depths of human emotion.

Just as George is going to offer an apologetic smile, he’s startled by a hand on his arm, the scent of smoke rising to fill his cerebrum and make him dizzy.

“Where the fuck were you?”

The words are dripping with expectation, righteous indignation lapping at Dream’s lips when George turns around. His arms are crossed over his chest, brows low over half-slitted eyes. Fuck what George thought about fire and flame and shared laughter. Anger rises in his throat, a heady rush.

“What does it look like?” George sneers, and even *he* is taken aback by the venom in his voice.

Dream’s eyes are furious, even though he has no right to be. “If you wanted to ride, you could’ve *waited* for me.” There’s a wounded undertone to his voice that George doesn’t care for, especially when Dream’s eyes flick to Liam.

“You looked like you were busy,” George hisses, eyes trailing to where Dream came from.

He can still imagine the arm on Dream’s own, the scent of bubblegum commingling with pitch and char.

Dreams gaze widens with incredulity. “So this is what it’s about?” he huffs. The alpha runs an agitated hand through his hair.

The presumption in that statement makes George see red. Because it’s true. It’s true and it’s pathetic for George to long for someone who was never his in the first place. His unspoken response must transfer to his scent, thunderclouds and rolling rain, because Liam growls next to him, eyes fixated on Dream.

George never imagined that he would be *fought* over, like some helpless omega, but the scene in front of him sears like tar through water.

“What are you looking at?” Dream snarls at Liam, lips pulling back from his teeth and shoulders straightening. The small area is crowded with his scent, acrid and all-consuming. George can admit

that Dream is terrifying when he wants to be. Pupils dilated with violence, his shoulders are straight, body pulled taut to tower a few more inches.

Teeth and piercing gleaming in the light, he looks like rage incarnate.

For what it's worth, the other alpha doesn't back down, squaring his shoulders and staring at Dream with a cocksure expression. George bristles at the rising tension. As an alpha himself, he's well aware of the pissing contests that can occur. George's own scent spills into the air involuntarily—a guttering warning.

"It looks like you're unwanted here," Liam says, mouth pulled into a grim line and arms crossed over his chest.

Dream's resulting snarl is enough for the other alpha to back down a little. "Why are you even here?" he asks bluntly, sparing no thought for Liam's pride.

The alpha glances at George, and George just sighs, irritated and put-out all at once. "It's alright," he reassures, tilting his head towards Dream as he addresses Liam. "Ignore him, he's an idiot."

Liam doesn't seem convinced, lip sucked in between his teeth and brows furrowed pensively. His scent still swirls in the air, shoving the smell of mint up George's nose. However, his shoulders soon relax as he focuses on George's face, that sunflower smile creeping up his mouth once more.

"So, about your number?" he asks hopefully.

George takes in the alpha in front of him. While Dream is blown glass and serrated steel, the alpha is spun-sugar and gently curving edges. He can smell Dream's annoyance, and allows himself to ponder the possibility—just to be snide.

Dream's patience runs out. "*George.*" The tone is sharp, allowing no argument.

"Maybe another time," he finally allows, offering an apologetic quirk of his lips.

"No worries," Liam says agreeably. "I'll be here," he says with a blinding grin.

George smiles back, just to be annoying, and relishes Dream's low growl. He turns around, grin fading. Coldness settling over his features, he shoves the crinkled paper bag into Dream's chest and pushes past him.

"Here's your stupid funnel cake."

"*George.*"

Dream strides after him, anger darkening his scent, but George doesn't turn back. He increases the length of his strides, irritated when Dream easily keeps up. *Fuck those long legs of his.*

"Seriously? You're ignoring me now?" Dream still trails after George as they wind through crowded booths, the scent of cotton candy and sugar thick in the air and making George dizzy.

When George doesn't answer, he grabs at his arm. It's enough to make him snap. George turns around, lips parted in a snarl that bares his teeth.

"What the fuck do you want? It's not like we're together or anything, so stop trying to govern everything that I do." Heat crests up George's cheeks, his eyes stinging. "I know that you're only in it for the sex, and I'm not interested right now."

“You really believe that,” Dream breathes. Whatever he sees on George’s face makes him scoff incredulously, fingers slipping from his arm. “You really believe that you mean nothing to me? That I spend time with you because I have nothing better to do?”

George just shakes his head. He doesn’t know what to believe. “I’m leaving.”

Dream snorts, a vicious little thing that makes George’s heart clench in his chest. “With what? You can’t drive.”

“I’ll walk if I have to,” he says through gritted teeth.

George does his best to navigate through the crowd, eventually reaching the entrance with Dream right behind him. The twinkling lights and summer air fades into the hot asphalt of a parking lot, and even though George can’t drive, he stands on his tip toes to scan the lot regardless.

At the sound of paper crinkling, he turns around to see Dream taking a big bite of the funnel cake. George should be annoyed at the sheer *nerve*, but can only gape at the spot of powdered sugar dusting his lower lip.

“What?” Dream asks, raising a cool eyebrow as he chews around his words. “I’m hungry. I’ll drive you home, give me a minute.”

Shaking his head, George doesn’t deign him with a response. He makes his way to Quackity’s car, sticking a hand in his pocket to fish out the keys. The vehicle is a little, scruffy thing; the navy-blue paint job is flaking and a window is spotted with pigeon poop. George grimaces with distaste.

“Why the hell did Quackity trust you with his keys? And shouldn’t we wait for them before we abandon ship?”

George keeps his voice flat as he turns to his phone, swiping through his contacts to message his roommate. “Quackity made it a personal goal to visit every single coaster in this park, and didn’t want his keys to fall out.”

“So he assumed that you were too much of a pussy to accompany him? He must’ve been wrong since you apparently were desperate to go on that Ferris wheel.” Dream’s words are intended to be teasing, but they come out anything but.

George tries not to let the taunt affect him, but his cheeks sting as he strings a text message to Quackity. Thankfully, his voice is cold as ever when he meets Dream’s gaze.

“I don’t see how it’s any of your business.” A chime vibrates against his fingers, and George looks down at the phone in his hands to confirm the message.

“Is that him?” Dream shifts closer, trying to peer over the curve of George’s shoulder.

George shoots him a venomous glare, deftly typing a response before slipping his phone into his back pocket. He’s just thankful that Quackity responded at all—the beta is standing in line for a ride, and preferred texting George than listening to Sapnap’s complaints.

“He said that you could drive back to pick them up later.” Dream pulls a face, and George ignores him. “Or Sapnap could get his new boyfriend to come on over and drive them home.”

Dream gives a cursory nod, reaching over to take the keys from George. For a moment, their hands brush, and George feels like a fool for craving the minute contact.

“Seems like everything’s settled then,” the alpha mutters as he slips into the driver’s seat and shuts the door.

George is forced to look at him through the car window for a second, sunshine reflecting off the surface. It makes looking at Dream almost painful, and George blinks before moving away. When he settles into his seat, Dream turns the air conditioning on without asking.

They’re silent for a few minutes as they navigate out of the parking lot, Dream’s eyes flicking from one car to another. But when they ease onto open road, skimming the hot asphalt of a highway, Dream deems it necessary to speak.

“Why did you leave?” His voice is devoid of gritty anger, stripped bare underneath the setting sunset that catches underneath the car wheels.

George shifts uncomfortably. A flash of white paper is tucked beside Dream’s car door, and George uses it as an excuse.

“You told me to get you dessert, Dream.”

The alpha stays silent for a moment, car filling with the heavy scent of pitch tinged with disappointment. His hands are braced on the steering wheel, shoulders corded with tension and eyes fixed on the road.

“Nothing happened between me and that omega, George,” he says quietly.

George shifts his gaze to his lap. His fingers clutch at each other, joints whitening from the pressure. He doesn’t feel angry anymore—that senseless rage is gone. But the heaviness remains, weighing his limbs with despondency.

They don’t talk for the rest of the ride.

The sky dies slowly when Dream pulls in front of George’s apartment. Blossoming tangerines and plums are reflected across the dingy hood of the car as Dream steps out to open George’s door. He doesn’t say anything, so George doesn’t either.

They just stand there for a minute, concrete steps still warm from the setting sun. Dream’s eyes are downcast, his hands stuffed into his pockets. George noticed that his lower lip is chewed red, piercing shining with a coating of spit—a nervous habit of his. And Dream’s tattoos, the dark ink traced over by George’s fingers countless times, seem insubstantial in the dimming light. Like they’re fading away under George’s gaze.

Like *Dream* is fading away.

George supposed that he hesitates for a moment too long because Dream’s lips curl into a sad smile, and the alpha pointedly avoids looking at him in the eyes. He mutters something about returning the car, jerking his thumb behind him as he takes a step back. Away from George.

The panic that blazes through his chest is visceral. Somehow, George knows. That if he lets Dream walk away, things won’t be the same. That their time together would slip through his fingers, becoming as insubstantial as the washed-out tattoo on Dream’s throat.

So George steps forward, grabbing Dream’s wrist. His skin is warm. “Can we talk?”

Dream’s eyes are inscrutable as he dips his chin in a wordless nod. George’s fingers fumble with his keys, but Dream follows silently behind him. The apartment looks different, like the colors

have been desaturated and stripped from everywhere he looks. Perhaps it's the effect of the Ferris wheel, the high vantage point scrambling his vision. Or perhaps it's due to the boy behind him, who stands hesitantly like he's never been here before.

George wants to scream at him for acting like a stranger. For pretending to ignore the spot of grease still on the couch from when Dream spilled popcorn during their last movie night. For avoiding the way that an abstract painting hangs crooked on the wall—when it was Dream who said that it looked better that way.

“You can sit on the couch,” George says brusquely. “I promise it won't bite.” He watches as Dream follows the instruction, sitting on the edge of a cushion with his arms folded in his lap.

“Do you want anything to drink?” George asks, helpless. “Some of that disgusting coconut water that you love?”

Dream just shakes his head, offering a small smile. “I'm fine, thanks.”

He looks smaller like this, head bowed and shoulder blades peeking through the back of his shirt. Other than the brief reply, he sits quietly, hands pressed together as he waits for George to do something.

It's so different from his usual demeanor that George opens his mouth before thinking. “I don't know if I can do this anymore.”

Dream looks up sharply at that, a bit of that familiar defiance in his eyes. “What do you mean?”

George's legs wobble, and he sinks down onto the couch. There's a foot of space between them, but it feels like an eternity.

“I can't give you what you want,” George says, staring into the creases of his hands like they're the most captivating things to ever exist. He can feel the dip in the couch as Dream shifts to look at him.

Dream's voice is soft. “And what do I want?”

George huffs, tipping his head low so that his hair shields his eyes. His words are halting, truth pouring spoonfuls of honey over the graveled syllables.

“That omega earlier,” George begins, and is cut off by Dream's muttered protest. “Let me *finish*.”

“Alright,” Dream soothes, moving a little closer until George can feel the heat coming from his skin.

Fingernails leaving perfect crescents on his palms, George takes a shuddering breath. It's better to come clean, loose and easy. He can't take much more of this anyways, and would rather Dream stare at him in disgust than indifferent.

“I can't be like that. I won't be perfect for you, won't hang on your every word or talk to you like you're the only person in the world. I won't pretend to be your pretty little omega—I don't *want* you to treat me like that.” George's heart is a hummingbird trembling in his ribcage. “I know things didn't start smoothly between us.” Dream scoffs. “At first glance, I thought you were an arrogant, boorish idiot.”

Dream's features go soft in a way they've never been before. “And now?”

“You’re still the same arrogant, boorish idiot.” Dream twitches, offended, and George has to fight a smile. “You annoy me at every turn, with your atrocious eating habits and your tendency to hog the bed sheets. You’re stubborn and never admit when you’re wrong and seem to have a perverse joy in pushing my buttons.”

“That I do,” Dream mumbles.

But George doesn’t stop the outpouring of words tumbling from a place deep within his chest. “Sometimes I want to slap the smile off your face. Kick you to the ground. Spit on you.” He shudders at Dream’s small leer, tongues of heat flickering to life in his abdomen. “Because you’re horrible and infuriating and *mine*. And I like this—I like *us*. But not if it means that I have to give up part of myself to be with you—if I have to pretend to be someone I’m not.”

Dream’s silence is thick, the type of tremorous pause that makes the oxygen slow in George’s blood. When he speaks, George wishes he didn’t.

“What makes you think I want to be with you like that?”

George’s face burns hot, then cold. The utter disregard in the question stings, causing George’s arms to wrap around himself as if to protect against the needles of hurt that prod at his skin. He knows that they aren’t together, that they aren’t a couple by any means. But it still *hurts* to hear Dream blatantly rejecting the tentative entreaty.

“What?” George scoffs, voice sharp and distant to his own ears. “Is the idea of being involved with me too disgusting to comprehend? After all, I’m pathetic, a *poor little slut*, as you’ve said so many times before.”

Dream looks taken aback, his eyes widening and mouth parting at the vulgar words. *Good*, George thinks viciously. He can finally show Dream how *pathetic* he can really be.

“George—that’s not what I—”

“Yeah?” George hisses, his fists clenched atop his knees. “Well, I didn’t hear you complaining when I was face-down in the mattress, ass up and begging you to fuck me like a complete whore.” George’s utter disgust with himself pinkens his cheeks, causes his nails bite into his palms.

He recalls the countless times that Dream compared him to a bitch in heat, nothing but a needy omega to be used. And George liked it. Even when he could never provide that for Dream.

He feels stupid. Stupid and useless for trying to tell Dream how he feels, hoping for something more. Stupid for trying to stand his ground, for saying that he’s not an obedient little fantasy come to flesh.

When he looks up, Dream has gone entirely pale save for two spots of burning color high in his cheeks. When he speaks, his voice trembles, sending sulfur and pitch into the air until George thinks he might choke on it.

“You bother me,” Dream begins. George closes his eyes in resignation. *Here it comes*. “I hate your entitlement, how you act like the world revolves around you. Sometimes I can’t breathe around the urge to knock your teeth in. You make me angry like I’ve never been before, with your pretty words and filthy mouth and the way you *claw* at me like you’re trying to see what’s underneath my skin.”

Every word sends George’s heart sinking lower and lower. An underwater chasm opens in his chest, unfiltered and bleak until George has to blink to stave off the tears clinging to his lashes. He

doesn't say anything, gaze casted onto his lap and the fraying threads at his knee.

Dream's words are furious when he finishes. "*And I can't stop thinking about you.*"

George snaps his head up, unsure that he heard correctly. "What?" he breathes, heart lodged in his throat.

"You heard me," Dream mumbles. This time, it's *his* turn to look away, the tips of his ears red. "I think about you always. When I'm at the new juice bar that opened up near my place, I think about what you might order. If you're more of a berry or tropical smoothie person."

George thinks that this is the stupidest thing he's ever heard. His eyes are wide as Dream continues.

"When I'm stuck in another two-hour meeting at work going absolutely *nuts*, I think about what you'd say if you were there. With your smart little mouth whispering dry insults about my coworkers to my ear."

"I'd do that anyway," George mumbles.

"I know you would." Dream's smile is a tentative thing, fragile and blooming. "I know how you take your tea and that you prefer that buttery, synthetic popcorn shit to the brand that Sapnap likes. I know that you pretend to hate it when I steal all the covers in bed, even though it gives you the perfect excuse to curl up next to me at night. I know that you're a workaholic, but you make it endearing somehow—staying up late enough to hear the birds chirp and glaring at me with circles underneath your eyes the next day."

George winces. "That doesn't sound very attractive."

There's a forest fire blazing in Dream's eyes, bright and burning. "It is to me," he says softly.

George flushes. He's been acting childish, he realizes. Running off without an explanation, and letting his insecurity and jealousy swallow him whole. Because George doesn't beg, but he might have gotten down on his knees just to hear Dream speak to him like this. With slow-licking heat bathing his voice. With eyes darkened from sincerity and longing.

And George realizes that he lost a long time ago. He'd surrendered possession of everything that matters to the alpha in front of him, tawny hair endearingly tangled despite the number of times George teased him to brush.

But he needs confirmation. Fingers trembling in his lap, George lifts his lashes. "You don't mind being with me like this?" He hesitates, nibbling on his lower lip. "Are you... You wouldn't prefer me to be an omega?"

"Are you kidding?" Dream scoffs gently. "You'd run me ragged during your heats. You're insatiable enough as it is."

Blush warming his cheeks, George offers a pleased little smile. "You pretend that I don't run you ragged already."

"You do," Dream replies, voice rough with ash and silk. "And I love you for it."

George whimpers at that, tipping his head up with his lips parted. "Kiss me?" he breathes.

And Dream does.

His hands cradle George's jaw as if he's something precious. It's not the blind delicacy and sugar-sweet reverence that George feared. It's deep and slow, passionate in a way that he's never known before. Dream kisses like he *knows* him, inside out, and George finally lets himself surrender.

There's flame licking at his skin, cauterizing nerves and bringing blood to the surface. Every touch burns, a coagulation of knife-sharp kisses that tip tender at the very end.

George wants to crawl inside his skin, sweat and musk and salt emblazoned in soft brain matter until he can only see in shattered fractals and *Dream*. He wants to swim in the alpha's arteries, feel the contracting beat of his heart beside his own.

It's like an obsession, the need to have Dream's every cell against his. He wants to sip from his marrow, drink the liquid fire of his veins, smearing every thought he's ever had into Dream's liminal brainspace. He wants to lick everywhere, lap up the wandering spires of his ribs, trace over the dulcet crease of his thigh, dampen the golden curls between his legs.

It's disgusting, the desire to get Dream sopping wet, and he wonders if it's due to the fact that they're both alphas, this need to claim every particle of Dream's being and have it done to him in return. It comes as naturally as breathing, every rise and fall of his chest navigating against the need to claw at golden skin and see sunshine pour through the thin membrane. Red blood cells bending to the force of his will. Fingernails brittle from their hold on Dream's hip.

Possessiveness has never felt so exquisite. George revels in it.

He inhales again, a ragged hacksaw of a breath as their lips part. Dream smells like a man. All sweat and salt and embers that never seem to go down. George pants deliriously, breaths catching in his throat until the rough rasp of sandpaper nearly cuts him to ribbons. He'll leave a pile of pink material behind, sun-blushed from the warmth of Dream's skin and rosy from the way kisses are bitten on his pale throat. He'll cry throughout it all, slovely whimpers as his edges are turned into spider silk.

Maybe he can wind the fabric of himself in Dream's hair. Maybe he'll like it.

Tie pretty bows around his ankles. Garland the material at his neck. Form silky spirals down the slope of tan arms. Leave George's brand flush on Dream's skin, without an inch of space. Learn the contours of his body, from the spaces behind his knees to the soft webbing between his fingers.

George wants to know every part of him. Inside out. In the dark. Underwater. Until he can see Dream branded in the backs of his eyelids, a mismatch of bones and flesh and freckles that look like constellations.

He wants to be gentle. He wants to be rough. He wants an arm draped over his waist, legs entwined with his own. He wants scratches down his back, a collar of bruises around his throat until breathing is a distant memory.

But there's one thing that George yearns to do. He exhales his desire onto Dream's collarbone, letting his fingers skitter across valleys and plains and once-unconquerable mountains. George wants it all.

He wants to eat him. Sink his teeth into his tendons. Leave ragged crescents on the paper of his skin. Lick him up like a popsicle until the barest sliver of wood and boy remain. (*How many licks does it take to get to the center of a tootsie pop? How many licks does it take to get to the center of you?*)

George thinks he's going mad with it. Mad with longing, punch-drunk and topsy-turvy. Churned inside-out and upside-down, a washer preset to tumble dry. He half-hopes that cotton will fly from his seams, unravel at his corners. Threads fraying and color washed out. Buttons loose and cuffs wrinkled. He wants Dream to destroy and put him back together again, over and over and over.

Even if it means that he'll never be the same, George will take all that he can get. He'll be his own ship of theseus. Molecules replaced under the harsh burn of Dream's lips, skin flayed from the aftermath. It doesn't matter. It never mattered. Not when Dream is right here, next to him.

Sucking a bruise on the sharp jut of his jaw. Tugging at the unraveling cotton of his hair. Pressing a palm to George's stomach, concavity filling with the sweetest longing.

It's not enough. It will never be enough.

And George can only take it. Only spit and spite hold him together. The thin gloss of it coats his eyes, covers his throat.

And he thinks that he's never been happier.

"Please," he whimpers as Dream guides him to the bedroom, spreads him across sun-warmed sheets. "*Please.*"

He doesn't know what he's asking for, but Dream grants it to him anyway. His clothes are stripped onto the floor, discarded petals of ivory and denim that will have to be ironed later. He ignores the sting of Dream's hands on his thighs, spreading him open with a half-minded intensity that has him seeing starlight and metal.

"Hold onto the headboard," Dream groans. His voice is like the richest wine, little spiced sips that George likes to sneak straight from the bottle. It warms him up from the inside until he can't *think* above the heartbeat pounding at his clavicle.

"*Dream,*" he gasps, wet words falling from a ravaged throat. His fingers twine with the wooden slats of the bed, ribs straining as his arms pull above him. George can only imagine the picture that he makes, innumerable greed lighting in Dream's eyes until George wants to wrap his thighs around a narrow waist and pull him close.

"I can't—" Dream shudders. "I need to be inside you."

George tugs at his shoulders, cotton fabric slipping through his fingertips and to the floorboard. Need spikes through him, fervent and red-hot and all-consuming.

He affixes his fingers to the head of the bed, polished wood cool underneath his fingertips. His stomach curves inward, a pretty little indentation that Dream's slides his hand over.

"*Yes,*" George gasps as he watches Dream strip off the last remnant of his clothing. "I want this. I want you."

Dream's eyes narrow, spiked shoulder blades tensing as he positions himself between George's thighs. There's a sweet cruelty to his touch, the burning intangibility of his fingers along George's hip.

It flays him from the inside out, rewriting his cells with pleasure until he can only feel the harsh solidity of Dream's chest pressed against his, the slick wetness decorating his abdomen. Darkness is a haven, and George gladly succumbs to it.

The sharp snap of a bottle opening makes him flinch, thighs parting as wetness drips along the soft skin.

“I’ve got to prep you, baby.” George’s eyes are closed, but he can imagine the wildness decorating Dream’s gaze. “Then we can have our fun.”

“Alright,” he whines. George arches his back towards the press of slick fingers against his rim. His ribs are fit to fly from his chest. “Just hurry *up*.”

Dream hisses at the wavering command, reading the desperate entreaty for what it is. Still, his fingers circle around the dip of furred skin, driving George mad with longing.

“So desperate for it.” George can feel warm breath against his abdomen, and stifles a moan as Dream bends down to speckle his skin with a nipping kiss. “So filthy, my little darling. And all of this for me.”

The derision-riddled endearment makes him cry out, drops of precum blessing his skin. But he grits his teeth, surrendering to the push-and-pull of saltwater and flame.

“Put your fingers in me, already.” When George opens his eyes, the world fragments into light. He can only focus on the possessiveness in Dream’s gaze. “Or I’ll find someone who can.”

The snarl that curls Dream’s lips is lovely, a sickly shade of green that turns his skin to liquid gold. The alpha doesn’t speak—he doesn’t need to. His actions are enough.

He works George open with brutal efficiency, fingers stroking swollen skin but avoiding George’s prostate entirely. Nerve endings are set aflame, body drifting in an ocean of fire. George’s mouth opens in a soundless scream as he’s worked to the edge—over and over and over.

He’s dizzy by the end of it, heart trying to fly free from the mortal restraints of his body. Silent tears slip down his temples, wiped away by adoring fingers. And Dream senses it, pressing gentle kisses to George’s cheeks and bracketing his hands underneath his thighs.

“Is this alright?”

“Yes,” George affirms, boneless.

The first push of Dream into him is home. A broad hand splays across his abdomen, the other tangling at his wrists. And all that George can feel is euphoria.

It comes in the scrape of his nails down Dream’s back, catching on the sharp jut of a collarbone. He can imagine it in his mind’s eye, the singular freckle underneath the protruding bone. George has pressed kisses to it before, in steam-ridden showers with their knees bumping together as Dream tries to hog all the water. He now scores the golden expanse with lines of red.

Euphoria comes in ragged puffs of air exhaled onto his skin. When George peeks through lidded eyes, Dream’s throat bobs with half-attempted swallows. He’s made fun of it before, the extravagant display of Dream’s neck—contracting and shifting even when he chews on a handful of cherries that they’d shared on the couch (George’s fridge was empty and the overripe fruit was all he had). The showy movement is obscene and over the top, like anything Dream does.

And satisfaction comes in the way that Dream reads his body in turn. He presses his thumb to George’s wrist, heartbeat fluttering through his pulse point. They’d made a game of doing this, lying underneath the cover of darkness and trying to guess the slowing beat of each other’s heart.

Dream guesses correctly more often. George fancies that he's getting there, too. Sometimes they send each other texts, a two digit number and a question mark lighting up George's screen in the middle of his lunch break. When George got it correct once, Dream bought him donuts. The brown sugar kind.

George knows that he's not easy to read. But Dream manages to do so perfectly. He grinds against George's pelvis before moving when he senses that George is getting antsy. He traces lightning onto soft skin, brushing roughened fingertips over the soft space between George's jaw and neck. And he turns his head to give George better access to his throat, allowing him to nip at the small scar at the base of his neck.

Dream made up stories about it when George asked. Ridiculous things—from swinging on a trapeze wire and catching on a bit of netting, to saving a clawing kitten from a tree. It became a joke between them, Dream spinning stories whenever George brushed his fingers against the silvery scar.

He only found out the truth when he bullied it from Dream last month, pink mouth split open around his cock and refusing to move. George laughed when he learned that the scar was from a simple bike ride, untied shoelaces tangling with metal spokes. He laughed and laughed until Dream guided him back onto his cock with a muttered grumble.

Dream worked him open beautifully, and now is no exception. Mind clouded with pleasure, George tugs his arms from the headboard to wrap back around Dream's shoulders.

“Back at the amusement park, with that omega—” George hisses at a particularly hard thrust, canting his hips upward to meet Dream's downstroke.

Pupils dilating, Dream just chuckles. “If you're still talking, I suppose I'm not doing a good enough job in fucking you,” he muses, hissing when George digs his nails into his shoulders.

“Dream,” George gasps out, half warning and half whimper. Thankfully, the alpha relents.

“I just wanted to win a prize for *you*, idiot. You're the only person on my mind. Not that attendant. Not anyone else. Just you.”

The motions of his hips are rhythmic, steadfastly pressing against George's prostate and making his toes curl.

“Yeah?” George gasps, flowering vines crawling from his throat. “So where's that prize you promised?”

He clenches as Dream shifts, finding a new angle inside that has him seeing stars.

“It—it was a lot harder to win than anticipated.”

“Of course it was,” George laughs, forehead scrunching as he tries to stave off his impending orgasm.

Dream can sense it, scent flaring to send George's mind spinning to saturn's outer rings. “Are you close, baby?”

George whimpers at the delicate tone, the way Dream's hand curves slick around his cock, thumb digging into the slit just how he likes it. A rush of affection floods his chest at the tenderness in Dream's gaze, warm emerald melting into pools of endorphins that George can feel in his chest. He's never wanted anything so bad before.

The longing to dig his nails into Dream's skin is overwhelming, going past flesh and blood and into the bone beneath. George wants to mark Dream as *his*, wants to be marked return. He doesn't allow himself to think, grinding himself into the rhythmic bunching of Dream's thighs, the desperate clamp of strong hands against his hips.

George begins to babble, filter loosening as the pit in his stomach grows deeper. "So *good*—please, please, Dream. I need you, I need more." He sobs, giddy with pleasure and desire, scent glands aching as they spill sugar and ozone into the air. "Let me mark you, please. I—I need to. Please, Dream. Please, let me bite you. Let me be yours."

Dream groans at that, twitching at the filthy words until George tightens around his cock. He holds George's gaze as he tips his chin deliberately, angling his neck to expose the glands at his throat.

His scent spills into the air, potent and unadulterated. It's only the pure force of George's will and the iron hand Dream has clamped around his cock that keeps him from coming.

It's you, Dream's eyes seem to gleam. *You're the only one I'll let by my throat.*

George cries out, cock twitching against his abdomen as Dream ruts against his prostate in a heavy, stuttering fuck. His fingertips prick at tan shoulders as he draws Dream towards him, nosing at the base of his exposed throat.

"Go on, baby," Dream urges. His eyes are soft as he grinds against George's thighs, skittering sparks of pleasure that make George keen.

The encouragement is all that it takes for George to sink his teeth into the hollow of Dream's throat. Metal splits under his tongue, tasting like something fiery and crackling and *Dream*. It's overwhelming, as if their souls touched in a kaleidoscope of glittering embers.

He's panting for an eternity, spit glossing his chin as he finally pulls back after countless minutes. When he looks up, Dream's eyes are violent with lust, a dab of copper-scented blood pooling at his clavicle. The sight of it is enough to send George over the edge, world vanishing only until the alpha underneath his fingertips remains.

Dream grits his teeth throughout it all, hardly flinching as George's release spatters up his chest. George can hardly feel anything but for the skeins of gold cradled in his heart, the scent of Dream up his nose. He's branded, the taste of flickering flame coating his tongue.

It's easy to ignore the way his back arches with pleasure, fingers clawing at Dream's back. But when the heavy fog of endorphins and euphoria dissipate, George opens his eyes to see Dream's concerned stare.

"Are you alright, sweetheart?"

George flushes at the pet name, aware that Dream remains buried inside of him. He rolls his hips forward tentatively, whining at the throb of overstimulation that coasts up his hips.

"Never better," he says with a crooked grin. Dream offers a little snort at the reply, canting his hips and unconsciously grazing against George's prostate.

George's whimper is met with Dream's own groan. "You're killing me here," Dream mutters, hair splying across his forehead until George raises his hand to brush it back.

"Easy for you to say—you're not the one currently getting fucked up the ass," George says.

The competitive edge shines in Dream's eyes once more, and George gasps as the alpha moves steadily once more. He's overstimulated and sore, but little flickers of pleasure dust his fingertips.

George tips his head against the pillow, relishing the coolness against his cheek and baring his throat. "You can mark me too, you know."

He can sense that Dream is getting close, little endearments falling from his lips as his shoulders tense. George draws his legs around slim hips, helping to draw Dream closer to the edge. He wants Dream to fall, to scatter in a burst of sunlight just as he had.

So he twines slender fingers through tawny hair, drawing Dream's head down until his nose brushes against a pale collarbone. "I'm not going to ask you again," he whimpers, hips flaring with staticky heat as Dream's angle shifts.

The words float gossamer through the air, snapping Dream's last barrier like the finest silk.

"You were born to be mine," Dream groans, forehead falling onto George's shoulder. "You were *made* for me."

Filthy words fall from his lips, punctuated by sporadic kisses against a pale collarbone. George can only lie back and listen.

"Even the first time I saw you—*fuck*," Dream shudders as his thrusts devolve into unsteady rocking, his words into clandestine mumbles. "I wanted you. I wanted you so badly that I didn't even realize it then. Your stupid mouth and the way you get under my skin—I can't pretend anymore."

"You don't have to," George soothes, hand coming up to caress the curve of Dream's back. Laudanum and eyebrights fogging his mind, George closes his eyes and admits, "It's the exact same for me."

The final barrier falling, George relishes the rapid thrum of Dream's heart against his. He croons, mindless heat sweeping his body as Dream noses at his neck.

The initial sting of Dream's teeth easing into his throat is washed away by the first lashes of pleasure. Bone-deep rightness sinks into his muscles, a cascading firestorm that feels like home. He can feel Dream's pants against his neck, the shuddering cry that the alpha makes as he comes. It's enough to coax George into a second orgasm, limply clawing pretty roses onto golden skin.

When Dream settles his knot deep within George, dampening pale thighs with excess release, it's like pleasure he's never experienced before. Because Dream stays within the cradle of his arms, murmuring pretty words into the shell of his ear. The bite throbs at the base of his throat, spilling their combined scent into the air.

When George cracks open his eyes, he sees a matching mark at Dream's neck. It makes fondness bloom in the depths of his chest, unrestrained happiness curling in his muscles. He can feel Dream's breathing, the other alpha pressed against his ribs. But George can also feel his own lungs contracting in an echoing rhythm, as if his body subconsciously recognizes who he belongs to.

It inspires a flare of possessiveness in his veins, causing George to thread slim fingers through Dream's hair. The other alpha is laying on top of him, a welcoming weight that shifts at the gentle touch.

And George marvels at what they've done, the clinging sense of *home* that seeps into his bones, at the first bite of pearlescent teeth into copper-flavored skin. At the first sink of Dream's teeth into

him.

The claiming bite won't stick forever, not like it would with an omega's. George merely twines his legs with Dream's, echoing his breathing until he threatens to follow the alpha into sweet slumber.

For once, the thought of fading claims and ripening marks don't rankle. Because George knows that he'll be there to renew the bite every month. By Dream's side, nipping at his jaw and keeping him on his toes. More sex doesn't seem like a problem—especially when it's Dream.

They'll choose each other. Over and over and over again. It's more than he ever hoped for.

In the fading lights of his consciousness, George feels Dream entwine their fingers, palm pressing against palm. He smiles into the pillow, crinkled fabric shifting as he traces a thumb over the back of golden skin.

“Was this all an elaborate ploy to hold my hand?”

George hums sleepily.

Dream's voice is a dying grumble, spiced with the sweetness of sex and flavored with nocturnal affection. “Take me to ride the Ferris wheel tomorrow and you'll find out.”

The ghost of a smirk is embedded in his voice. George can't stop himself from reaching up to trace the curve of Dream's bottom lip, leaning forward to press a chaste kiss atop a silver piercing.

“It's a date,” he confirms, curling further into the warmth of Dream's body. When the alpha doesn't immediately shift, George frowns and manhandles Dream's arm to drape over his waist. “*Hold me*, dipshit.”

Squeezing George against his chest, Dream murmurs an affectionate, “*Smartass*,” into dark hair. “Sleep, and tomorrow will come faster.”

George obeys, the promise of colored spokes and gentle touches lingering in the zenith of the sky.

They're late.

Cramming his foot into a shoe, George doesn't bother to tie his laces. “Grab the keys,” he barks at Dream, who frantically tries to button his shirt with trembling fingertips.

“I'm *trying*,” Dream snaps back, brows furrowed with annoyance as he tries to fasten the little buttons along the shirt that he borrowed from George.

“Try faster.”

They're late, and it's all Dream's fault.

George thinks he may be acting a little harsh, but it wasn't *him* who had the stellar idea of waking his partner with an under-the-covers morning blowjob. Sure, George may have got an orgasm out of it, but that was *before* Dream suggested shower sex. And kitchen sex.

He ran George ragged, coaxing every last drop of pleasure with a sleep-husky laugh and warm fingers. And he had the utter *nerve* to guide George into his lap, feeding him tart bites of strawberry and slightly-overcooked (rubbery, really) forkfuls of egg. (George enjoyed it but *still*. He has to have some restraint.)

And now they're running late to Quackity and Sapnap's weekly cafe meetup because Dream is a *sex fiend* who apparently gets aroused with one glance at George. (Not that George is *complaining*, per se.)

But they're already twenty minutes late, and George is afraid to look at his phone in case he sees a string of Quackity's curse-ridden text messages. Thankfully, Dream possesses the fine motor skills necessary to button his shirt and smooth down his hair so he doesn't look like he's come fresh from fucking George against the kitchen counter. George, on the other hand, doesn't look as pristine but supposes that this is the best that he can do.

"Come on," he hisses, grabbing Dream's hand and dragging him out the apartment. "They're waiting for us."

"They can wait a little longer," Dream groans, but follows George into the sunshine. He's immediately forced into a quick jog, wincing all the while. "First I have to borrow one of your incredibly uncomfortable shirts, and now you're making me run? C'mon George, after last night I thought that we'd be done with the torture."

"Yeah, like it was torture to fuck me until I cried," George snarks back, breaths panting from his quick steps.

"Never said that," Dream protests uselessly as his long legs allow him to easily catch up with George.

"Stop talking or I'm going to pass out right here on the concrete."

Sweat is already gathering at George's temples from the brisk jog, but Dream looks annoyingly unaffected. George can tell that the alpha wants to poke fun at his endurance, or lack of it. He hopes that a chilling glare is enough to nip the thought in the bud.

It doesn't seem to work against Dream's attitude, because the alpha chuckles. "But then you won't be able to see Sapnap's stunned face when we walk in together."

"Serves them right," George huffs. "Nosy bastards."

George supposes that he should feel bad for abandoning Sapnap and Quackity at the amusement park, but at least he received a text from his roommate that they'd all be staying at Karl's after the omega picked them up. Apparently, they pulled an all-nighter playing *Roblox* of all things. George is just glad that he didn't have to lock Quackity out last night after he invited Dream over—though he definitely has to disinfect certain areas of their flat (the kitchen, for one).

"I'm assuming that we still don't want them to find out about us?" Dream asks, sliding his gaze over to George in question. Jade green brightens to a lustrous emerald in the sunshine, and George swallows around a suddenly dry throat.

"I don't really care if they find out," he says, swerving around an upended trash can. "But they're insufferable and I don't mind keeping them both in the dark for a little while."

"Sounds good to me," Dream affirms, flashing George a quicksilver smile. "I'll have you all to myself."

George flushes but doesn't reply, training his eyes on the wooden sign outside *Le Moment* that displays today's special.

"Just try not to make it obvious," he grins in challenge before sweeping through the glass door.

They find Quackity and Sapnap immediately, sitting on the same side of a plush-looking booth. Quackity hogs all the pillows at his back, and a half-finished cappuccino sits before him. When Sapnap sees them, he stuffs the last cinnamon cookie into his mouth, daring Dream to protest.

“I see you guys already ordered,” Dream says after he sits across from the betas, George sliding into the chair next to him.

Sapnap scowls. “Yeah, after you stood us up for thirty minutes.”

Dream fiddles with the waxy tablecloth, rolling insolent eyes. “It was hardly thirty minutes.”

“Besides, we’re here now, aren’t we?” George adds.

Quackity and Sapnap don’t look amused. George occupies himself by pushing a crumb along the table with his thumb.

“Awful coincidence that you arrived here at the same time,” Quackity suddenly begins, brows lowered over suspicious eyes.

Sapnap nods vigorously, tacking on his own two cents. “Especially after you left together and abandoned us at the amusement park yesterday.”

A veiled grimace flits over George’s features. He doesn’t particularly enjoy the new turn the conversation is taking, especially since Quackity and Sapnap seem to be operating in cahoots. George surreptitiously pinches Dream’s thigh to help him respond.

For what it’s worth, Dream doesn’t flinch—though he does send him a rather nasty kick to the ankle. “C’mon guys, George wasn’t feeling well. Must’ve been all that funnel cake he ate.” Dream’s sidelong glance is bland, but George can detect the cheeky wink beneath the surface. “And you guys crashed at Karl’s anyways. No harm, no foul.”

Dream’s response is easy, assured. George lets a small smile curl over his features—nothing too bold. Like a mildly sweet sip of tepid tea, he hopes that the composure keeps the betas fooled.

He’s somehow not surprised that it fails.

Quackity looks even more suspicious, eyeing Dream and George in turn. “I suppose that George had a stomach ache today, too. If that’s what you were discussing before coming into the cafe.”

George flushes a bright rose, remembering the way that he tugged Dream toward *Le Moment*, surveying him and patting down wayward strands of tawny hair. If Quackity indeed saw all of that, then their farce is well over. George’s pinky finger is tremulous against the edge of his chair, tapping out an irregular rhythm. After a moment, Dream’s finger hooks with his, the other alpha filling the silence while George reels at the small gesture.

“Can we finally order something? Or are we going to spend the rest of the afternoon discussing George’s bowel movements?”

Despite George’s glare, Dream’s drawled question seems to work. Fifteen minutes later, brown sugar crusted pastries and aromatic cappuccinos sit in front of them. Sapnap’s talking about Karl, and Quackity feigns disgust at the whipped expression across his face.

George can’t resist teasing his roommate, lilting words mingling with the steam rising from his coffee. “Now it’s your turn, Quackity. We gotta find someone for you before you become completely decrepit.”

Dream chuckles at the remark, pinky curling against George's own. The warmth is familiar, and George smiles despite himself.

Quackity doesn't seem nearly as amused. His eyes narrow into slits, clearly recognizing the same words that he once parroted to George. "You *owe* me," he begins. "My skills as a wingman are unmatched. On the other hand, you leave something to be desired."

George snorts. "What skills? Last I recall, you convinced me to download *Grindr* and then spent an entire evening rating random men's unsolicited dick pics. Wingman my ass."

Dream tenses a little at the mention of other men, and George curls his pinky more securely around Dream's. A fond smile curving his lips, George thinks that Dream's jealousy is a little endearing.

His thoughts are interrupted by Quackity's anguished groan, head thumping to the table and jostling the empty coffee cups. "Oh fuck *off*. Is it my fate to be fifth wheeling for the rest of eternity?"

"Fifth wheeling?" George frowns.

"Yeah. Sapnap and his little bundle of sunshine, and you and your boytoy." Quackity points between George and Dream with slight disgust.

George sits in stunned silence, still at the end of that accusing finger. His mouth parts to protest, but all words scramble in his brain.

"I'm not a boytoy," Dream scoffs. After a second, his lips part into a smug, self-satisfied smile. "I'm eye-candy."

George has to resist mimicking Quackity and slamming his head down onto the table, too. "I don't know where you got that idea, but I can assure you—"

"You think we haven't noticed you guys holding hands under the table?" Sapnap deadpans. He mindlessly brushes crumbs from his chin while fixing George with an unamused stare.

George immediately disentangles his hand from Dream's, placing it atop the table as if to dispel the vehement claim.

"You're not subtle," Quackity adds, exasperated. "What are we supposed to expect when you disappear together in the library or during movie nights or at coffee shops, and return smelling like *shit*?" He wrinkles his nose.

"It's gross," Sapnap agrees.

George just gapes, glancing back and forth between the two betas. He has to resist bringing his collar to his nose to take a sniff. When he looks over, Dream is flushing a faint, pleased pink.

Her grits his teeth, resisting the urge to smack the other alpha clean across the face. This is a *serious* matter—they've been trying to hide it, but *Sapnap* of all people was the one to call them out, and a George doesn't think he can handle Quackity knowing about his sex life, *especially* when they've done it in the library and an elevator and a fucking *broom closet* for god's sake—

"I guess the secret's out," Dream says cheerfully. George looks at him in surprise. "So you won't object if I do this?"

The scent of infernos and winter rain reaching his nose, George barely has any warning before the

alpha turns to him with an easy grin. All the words are dissolved on his tongue as Dream pulls George into a kiss, teeth nipping at his lower lip. With Quackity's screech and Sapnap's squawk in his ears, George slowly smiles against Dream's mouth, feeling perfectly at home.

End Notes

congrats on reading 50k of omegaverse filth lol

this fic has a little bit of everything, and I just wanted to squeal over some little details that I made sure to write about. I always knew that I wanted George to have his whole winter rain/thunderstorm/ozone thing going on, and Dream to have his fire shit. however, other than George's scent, I think i'd have to say that my favorite is Quackity's (cherry slushies and late night drives, come on).

on that note, I think that one of my favorite relationships in this fic is between George and Quackity. writing their banter was so fun, and i love Quackity's sarcastic comments and little insights into his character (like his passion for law and Star Wars and certain brands of popcorn).

George is also such a funny character in this. he's finishing up his graduate thesis and can be so snarky (one of my favorite parts to write was him sneering about Dream's band tee and calling him a poser). fun fact i had the barbecue pizza i wrote about in this fic and it's actually not bad. so.

Dream is a finance bro, a former football player, and a donut enthusiast just because.

i never really thought that i'd write an omegaverse fic, but found it to be so much more fun than i thought. writing about found family and George not pretending to be anyone other than himself was so important to me, and i hope that you all enjoyed the fic as much as i did writing it!!

let me know what you think, i love reading your comments! follow me at [miamango17](https://www.tumblr.com/miamango17)

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